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MAY 3rd

Film teaching has been introduced into the classroom as a development of many subject areas – especially English, Liberal Studies, the Humanities, Screen Education, and Art. Consequently, the form which film teaching takes is influenced by the context in which it is placed: film can be presented as visual aid, evidence, stimulus, entertainment or art. Yet each of these particular uses is regarded as film teaching or screen education by its advocates.

The aim of the SEFT Annual Conference on May 3rd at University College will be to examine two of these approaches: one primarily concerned with film as evidence, the other with more formal film teaching.

Jim Hillier, Film Research Officer for the Humanities Curriculum Project, and Colin McArthur, Teacher Adviser in the BFI Education Department, will present arguments for their particular approaches and will support their arguments with extracts. One extract from *A Generation* will be used by both speakers who will demonstrate their different approaches to it.

Following the speakers, there will be a general discussion chaired by Roy Knight, Head of Film and Television Department, College of the Venerable Bede. In the discussion it is intended that the central problem examined should be the way in which film teaching can be incorporated into the school and college curriculum – in which subject area can it be most valuably integrated?

Tickets for the conference can be obtained from the Secretary on payment of the Conference fee of 5s which should be forwarded with the reply slip on page 5.

SEFT ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1969

APPROACHES TO FILM TEACHING

An examination of the aims and methods implicit in two specific approaches to film teaching by:
Jim Hillier, Film Research Officer,
Humanities Curriculum Project,
Colin McArthur, Teacher Adviser,
B.F.I. Education Department.

Film extracts will be shown and the speakers will explain how they would differ in the interpretation and use of the same materials.

This will be followed by a discussion on the place of film study in the school curriculum chaired by:
Roy Knight, Head of Department of
Film and Television, Bede College

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11 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday, May 3rd, 1969.
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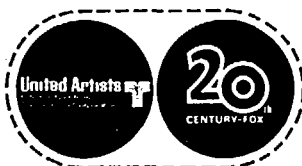
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An Interview with Hugh Whitmore

Philip Crick

Hugh Whitmore was trained for the stage at R.A.D.A. and subsequently acted in repertory. He entered TV in 1959 as Publicity Writer for Associated Television. Since 1963 he has been a freelance dramatist and screenwriter and has written numerous television plays including *Dan, Dan, The Charity Man* (A Wednesday Play), *Frankenstein Mark II* (BBC 'Out of the Unknown' series) and *Amerika* (adapted from Kafka for Theatre 625) and his film work has involved collaboration on the scripts of *Decline and Fall*, *All Neat in Black Stockings* and *The Battle of Britain*.

Philip Crick interviewed Hugh Whitmore shortly after the latter's play *Hello, Good Evening and Welcome* was broadcast in October 1968.

SYNOPSIS OF: *HELLO, GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME*

Two days are seen in parallel, Nick Prockter, television interviewer, is planning a programme with his team. At the same time an ordinary day appears to be beginning in the life of Alan and Betty Carter, citizens.

Betty sends Alan down to the Bank to withdraw some money. Alan runs into a raid on the bank made by Loader, Bream and Mellett. Alan intervenes, and in the struggle which ensues, he is accidentally shot dead by Loader.

Hearing of the incident, Prockter takes the matter up for its newsworthiness, and arranges for Betty Carter to appear on his programme.

Prockter also invites Jardine, an ex-police Officer to give his views on the incident in the presence of Mrs. Carter. Jardine says, in effect, that Alan was foolish to have tried to intervene, and hints that the motive may not have been selfless, and may have been one of gaining publicity. Shocked by these remarks, Mrs. Carter rushes away from the interview

Philip Crick is a poet and film critic. He teaches at Guildford College of Art

in full view of the studio audience, and of the viewing public, in a state of tears. Distressed, and in panic, Loader too, is somewhere watching the programme and is so brought into touch with some of the consequences of his action in unexpected form.

Prockter's producer, Whitaker, taxes Prockter as to his motives in staging a public display of private grief. Prockter replies that news isn't news without 'boom, bezaz, and impact' and that in giving her publicity in this fashion he has done her a favour.

The play concludes with a 'business as usual' scene in which the production team are busy planning yet another programme. Who should they highlight next? The question is addressed through the screen to the viewer. Who will be picked out next from the unlit mass?

Philip Crick: Could you trace out the history of the script?

Hugh Whitmore: It started off as a vague idea to do something about the nature of interviews; of how they are presented as a reality, and of how in fact they are contrivances, either filmed and then edited into shape, or as in the case of the play rigged by the introduction of somebody else to an interviewer.

I was asked by the BBC to do a Wednesday Play, and I presented them with just that, the idea of doing a play about T.V. We talked about it. Eventually, I did a two-page outline – wrote the play. I worked on it for about a year, but was doing other things at the same time. I came back each time to trying to isolate an incident and a situation which would illustrate what I was trying to put forward. The BBC were splendid, because they did not offer any objections to my doing this sort of play, which they could easily have done. I cut it heavily to fifty minutes. I don't know if this was good or bad. Certain things went which I had particularly liked. On the other hand the cuts as made may have sharpened it.

PC: The initial cuts were yours?

HW: They were. The BBC did look at it from the legal point of view, but they did not insist on any cuts for internal 'political' reasons. We tried to do this play on several lines of production. The part concerning the wife, her husband and their home life, we treated almost

as a commercial. We did shots of the milk bottles, and of toast popping up, so that the language used reflected back to the television medium itself. Also, the shots of the young criminal, Loader, were done in 'newsy' handheld style, the cameraman employed was a newsreel and documentary man, who had not done a play before. The programme conference was shot in a straight TV way. When we came to the studio section we decided that the best thing was to stage a *real* programme. A half-hour TV show was devised. We had in an audience of about four hundred people – there was a great deal more to it than was shown in the play. There was a pop group who were interviewed. Robert Morley came in and was interviewed; and a group called the Medieval Society fenced, and talked about fencing. Then at the end 'Mrs. Carter' was brought on as being the widow of a man who had been shot that morning. The odd thing is that the audience believed it totally, and in fact one of the comissionaires said to someone on the floor that he thought this incident was carrying things too

The television show



far. He had to be persuaded afterwards that it was part of a play. Also, the actress who played the part (of Betty Carter) was not shown the set before she went on it, nor was she told what she would be asked. But she did know the nature of the character. She knew the sort of thing she would be asked and that she would have to break down. She came on as near as possible in the state of somebody who had undergone some pretty big shock earlier in the day.

PC: Was there any difference between the finished product and your initial concept? That is to say: the BBC approved in principle, but did you have to modify it on the way?

HW: From the producer, there was no real objection to anything. He made some suggestions which helped to clarify the plot, and suggestions of a minor nature which helped to develop the characters. I had made the programme conferences far more broad, far more caricatured; and the director thought it would be more reasonable to make the people involved in the preparation of the programme intelligent, otherwise the weight of the argument against the show would have been dissipated. I thought this was fair.

PC: So you think the play came out as intended?

HW: That's difficult to say, because one works closely on development *during* production. When your ideas become modified after a period of time you begin to think that these modifications were your own idea. I think that by and large it did come out much as I had anticipated. I would have liked the central character (Prockter) to have been presented so that his personal life was shown; there could have been more demonstration of the person he was in private. Had we had more time, we would have done that. He was a symbol of a certain type of TV interviewer, whereas I would have liked him to have been more than just that. I would have liked to say more about the sort of man who goes into TV and works in that sort of programme.

PC: The essence of the play seemed to come out in the clash between Prockter and the producer, Whitaker. This clash at the point seemed to me to indicate that the play was going to shift to his personal life. Was this the essential scene?

HW: Yes. To digress . . . at one stage I did think of quite a different story which concerned a Prockter character who was invited to a meeting of an organization called the British Freedom League, who were ostensibly going to give an award. When he stands up to make a speech, he is shouted down. The audience proves to be composed of people whom he had interviewed in the past. They turn on him, and then show him a film which they have made in which Prockter's mother is told that her son is homosexual. But this idea was not smiled upon, because if you make a definite slur of that kind, it could conceivably be misconstrued. It swung matters too far the other way. In the second attempt, the mechanics of the programme more important.

PC: I felt the temperature went up considerably when there was this showdown between producer and interviewer; and at this point it was like a window breaking. A large number of fractures occurred. I felt that you, the playwright, were going to follow up these fractures, because at this point Prockter as a person was being challenged, but it resolved itself here into a slanging match between Prockter and Whitaker, didn't it?

HW: It would be difficult to follow up those fractures because I, and all those involved find ourselves in the same predicament, that is to say: wanting to be honest about what we're doing, but having to make an impact on the audience, who are fairly flattened by the volume of TV. Even in writing a play, you have still *got to get the audience looking at the damn thing*. One has to assume that whenever anything starts on TV the first reaction is to switch off, or over. So, it's a dilemma for TV people.

PC: I would like to ask you about the arguments of Crossman and Benn. They are not coincidental with what you have been saying. They run parallel. Do you, for example, think that the entertainment criterion is trespassed upon, excessively?

HW: Trespassed upon. In what way?

PC: Well, you had in your play this investigator whose criterion was: if it's entertainment, it's good; if we get a reaction, it's good. This is what I'm here to do . . . and so on. There was the exposure of this woman's feelings, as a central matter. Do you believe that incidents of this



Robert Hardy
as Nick Procter

kind should never take place, that the framing of peoples disasters in this way is wrong, and ought not to occur?

HW: Any hint of censorship, or telling people what they should and should not do is the last thing which I would be happy to see. Since you've brought up Crossman – I agree that they are parallel to an extent. But what I gather Crossman is on about is that TV is over-selective. That is to say that he felt that rather than have thirty seconds of an explosive speech at a party conference, we should have much longer, giving a truer picture of what is said. Is that right?

PC: May I summarize? He says that there's a decline in 'activism' in this country; and that British parliamentary democracy is moving towards the form of plebiscitary democracy which he identifies with De Gaulle. He says that TV assists this decline by the 'trivialization' process. Because of this you get a gladiatorial process where two politicians slug each other for a short period of time. He says that this is a distortion, and he wants to balance

this distortion (which he doesn't actually want removed). He says that politicians are a serious minority, and there is a serious minority audience for them. He objects to what he terms the 'spatchcocking' of important news items into Twenty Four Hours; and he goes on to suggest that unedited sections of Question Time in the House, and of Ministerial statements should be given. He also advocates that unedited sections of Select Committee work should be given. He seems to feel that this would give political life here a shot in the arm. The connection occurs to me, that in TV as now presented the time-factor plus its usual manipulative techniques tend to send up politicians as snarling makers of abuse, instead of just people. I should have thought that here was a link with the treatment of the woman in the play; and this is why I ask do you think that the use of entertainment criteria is being pressed too far.

HW: If one is dealing with someone as in my play, that is to say, someone involved in a tragedy, some personal crisis, then I would have thought in some cases the angle is pressed too hard, because it is presented as entertainment. *All* TV is presented as entertainment.

PC: Is it *received* as entertainment?

HW: It's bound to be. Not by all of course, but by most people. The vast majority of the audience is a fairly uncritical mass, and whatever appears on TV they are going to take as entertainment. If it doesn't entertain, then they are liable to switch off, or go to bed, or something.

PC: Are political matters, or matters of the heart, such as one's husband being shot, valid as entertainment material?

HW: I want to draw a distinction here. You cannot draw a really valid relationship between the two instances, because despite the fact that the audience is composed of countless millions, really TV is directed to one or two people in a room. Therefore, something of a personal nature, something like you have on a Colin Morris programme or Man Alive comes across as an intimate thing to two people sitting at home because it is a personal tragedy to which they can relate. On the other hand politics isn't a personal matter in that sense. Politics concerns the millions.

PC: It has an abstract character.

HW: I saw Benn on the Frost programme, and he did say what I thought were the most amazingly naïve things. It's all right to say 'wouldn't it be marvellous for the Engineering Unions to have an hour in which to explain their case?' . . . fine. But who would watch it? This is the point. TV is a professional medium. You can't just go on and make any sort of impact or show without knowing what you are about. I have only been on TV twice, and on both occasions, I have been so desperately nervous, because the cameras were pointing at me, that I could barely say a coherent sentence, and yet I have been working in the medium for ten years. If you have someone who is the secretary for the branch of an engineering union in Bradford, say, then he would get nowhere. If you watch the Party conferences it is bad enough. If these people were actually in the studio they would not express themselves. Therefore I should have thought it essential for some sort of editorial control to be exercised.

PC: So the argument is really about the *nature* of the editorial control?

HW: Yes; and it must be done from two angles. One. If it's not interesting, nobody is going to watch it, anyway. Secondly, there is the responsibility angle. If you are presenting two politicians in a studio, and you have to encapsulate an argument which they have had in the House of Commons which ranged over half an hour or so, into eight minutes then editorial control should be exercised to make sure the exchanges do not distort the original arguments.

As far as presentation goes, I think this matter of striving to be fair at all costs, can lead you into dodgy ground in some cases. I don't see any harm in an outright attack which would then be regarded *as* an attack, rather than this attempt to make everything seem terribly fair. That gets nowhere. If you get on the one side Enoch Powell, and on the other Michael Foot; and the argument goes back and forth while the interviewer sits there saying 'Ah, but on the other hand, Mr. Foot says this, and Mr. Powell says that . . .' you are really getting nowhere at all.

PC: Is your criticism, then, that the editorial function in the case of your bereaved woman was abused by Prockter?



HW: The point which is the most important is the question of the blurring of reality and fiction. You see, Prockter had a real person in a real tragedy, which he developed and communicated by means which were contrived. On the other side of the fence, in a play like *Cathy Come Home*, you had a fictional play which tried to get its point across by making it seem as real as possible. Both treatments seem to me to have dangers. Of course, a play is a play; and on the other hand reality is reality. All I was trying to do was to point out in my play the danger that exists.

Jane Evers as the
Duty Officer and
Ruth Truncer as
Betty Carter

PC: But it's not merely a medium of entertainment, is it? Isn't it true to say that TV has a journalistic role also? You have crossed wires here which make it difficult to discriminate in any given instance.

HW: So is printing, isn't it? The *Evening Standard* used to have short stories in it. You can't say that because the *Standard* has news on its front page and short stories inside, it's dangerous?

PC: But somehow one knows with a newspaper that this is a story, and that is news. This distinction disappears in TV.

HW: Everything on TV is edited. Even the news. A newsreel shot will be presented in a fifteen second news-clip, giving the most dramatic moment. Everything is a selection. Even the hard news story is given the 'art treatment'.

PC: It's selective, but isn't it also *staged*, in some way? This is a factor in TV which does not happen in print. What you did in the play was to stage a staging. Once you bring it within reach of cameras, you're translating. Bring it into a studio and you're translating more. You draw Betty Carter, in her emotional state, into a contrived situation.

HW: Yes. This sort of contrivance, I suppose, has to be. In order to receive a TV picture, you've got to have lights, set, and sound boom. The very character of the medium depends on contrivance.

Let us take an imaginary case: a woman, for example, who has a thalidomide baby, and you are going to do a half-hour programme. You are going to examine this woman's reactions to her misfortune. On the screen, it looks as though she is sitting in her living room on the sofa talking to you personally about what has happened. In fact, she is sitting in her room confronting a film camera, a cameraman, sound recordist, boom operator, clapper boy, and everybody else. Even with that which seems the baldest reality, there is all this between you and the woman.

Some interviewers, Colin Morris for example, and Desmond Wilcox are marvellously sympathetic interviewers at their best; but there must be some strain, or falsification of the subject's expression because of the sheer mechanics in which the team is operating. Now, if you take that sitting at home for half an hour: that is the nearest to truthful reporting that you can get. But, as we know that is not often done. It is usually more dressed up. Imagine for example a woman walking along the road. She goes to the front gate, opens the door, goes into a room, sits down, and starts talking in to a camera. Every now and then you see the reporter asking her questions. Well, for one thing she has to stage the walk

to the front door, with the cameras outside. Then, they've got to bring all the cameras in, shoot her walking to the door, re-position the cameras for her sitting on the sofa to answer the questions; then shoot the reporter separately asking the questions for cut-ins, and so on. The whole thing assumes the proportions of a feature film, virtually, with set-ups, re-positioning of cameras and lights, and sound-level tests, and everything else. So what appears to be simple on screen is in fact an extremely complicated mechanical process.

PC: This raises another aspect, which is that, when it comes to print, you have a public which is literate and to some degree critical; but you have an uncritical public when it comes to the TV.

HW: But McLuhan tells us all that subsequent generations will behave in a reverse manner.

PC: That may be so; but at present they will have to learn to read between the scansion lines? They may then know what is taking place at the other end, and react differently?

HW: I think the public may cease to be moved by what they see. For example, in the programme *All My Loving*, they threw in old clips of violence to give it a kick now and again. It struck me as an irresponsible way of making a film. I thought it disturbing because of the cold calculation and the clichés. It was similar to a commercial. I first saw the clip of the Japanese burning to death when it was issued in the war, when I was a child, and unused to that sort of exposure. I have never forgotten it. Then there it was, backing The Cream.

PC: Do we increase in insensitivity because of this?

HW: I think so; and therefore this makes the Nick Prockters of this world more and more justified in staging things, to make us realize perhaps, that for God's sake this is terrible.

PC: In other words, there is an increasing pressure to try to get a reaction from an increasing lyde-sensitized mass?

HW: Yes, I think so; a real danger actually. Prockter may well be right. I don't say that it's *desirable*; but given the circumstances, he may well be right.

PC: So: we have a mass-effect of TV which produces a kind of defence against its own content?

HW: Everybody's blunted. No matter how intelligent or sensitive you are. Night after night, you see people being killed in Vietnam. It has the effect of diminishing returns. You begin to think 'Oh. . . . at it again. . . .' One ceases to realize that underneath a thousand puffs of flame down there, four people are being burned to death.

On this count, one of the newspapers had a go at me. They said people can distinguish between illusion and reality.

PC: This was implicit in the play?

HW: At one point Prockter says: 'In this day and age, reality by itself is meaningless.'

HW: There must be some sort of seeping out; some sort of aftertaste. I don't think it would be enough to destroy their entire lives but there must be some consequence.

PC: We can see how in retrospect the halcyon days of Hollywood affected people's values very considerably.

HW: I would think that for anything to influence people's values constructively, then, loosely speaking, it must be some kind of moral influence; and I can't see that TV has had a great deal of that.

PC: Then what is this afterglow?

HW: I think that you can see the way it acts by looking at commercials. If you look at a commercial for Sunblest or Omo, or whatever the ordinary family is presented in such a way as to make the viewer think: 'Ah, that's like me.' Or, more subtly: 'That's how I would like to be.' *The Newcomers*, or *Coronation Street*, act very much on identification of this kind. 'That's like Graham. That's like Auntie,' for example. It's easy to say that it makes people more acquisitive because they see that Vivienne Cooper has a better washing machine than they have, but I think that that is a glib and possibly untrue argument.

PC: Are you saying that the effect of TV is to give people *images of themselves*, and of their way of life which they then accept?



HW: I don't know whether anyone actually accepts, or whether they don't just subconsciously strive towards such images.

Ruth Trouncer as
Betty Carter and
Ralph Bates as
Alistair Gorringe

PC: Does it set norms of any kind?

HW: I would think it has done a great deal to set a norm. If you take, for example, the Kelloggs family, who appear with nauseating frequency. One day, they're mending the car. Another day, they're going shopping. The daughter's taking her driving lessons . . . and so on. That's a cleverly created family because it has a kind of complacent effect, insofar as it promotes the thought: 'That's like us. We're like them; all a part of one big happy family together.' It must be the case otherwise advertisers would not bother. It must be that people can say they recognize themselves before they can be stimulated to go out and buy the product.

I think it might have the very strange effect of solidifying a *vast* middle-class norm; of creating a vast in-

distinguishable mass of people, excluding at the top those who are noble-born, and at the lower end of the scale, the very poor, the uneducated, and the deprived, but leaving in between a band of people who are set in their ways, and who are encouraged to be set in their ways, because they are bound to the image of themselves which TV beams out.

I would think that the serials too are norm-setting, and apart from good examples such as *Man of Our Time*, they can be thought of as extended commercials with stories instead of products.

PC: What about the Wednesday Plays? They may be by different hands, but that would not preclude them from being norm-setting. You and your contemporaries might well be contributing to this process?

HW: Yes. I suppose it's the norm of the posh Sundays' readership. Sidney Newman who started the Wednesday Plays . . . he had this incredible phrase 'agitational contemporaneity', which was the sort of thing he was after . . . things like *Cathy Come Home*, *Up the Junction*, and so on.

PC: Are playwrights striving for this?

HW: The only thing a playwright should strive after is to express his theme with as much clarity and honesty as he can find. To sit down and think; 'Ah, I must be contemporary . . .' is unreal.

PC: Yet, your play is agitational. And contemporaneous. Are plays like yours perhaps tending towards setting criteria at the Colour Supplement level?

HW: They might fulfil the same function as the Colour Supplement. I tend to think people may sit at home and think to themselves, well, I've read Katherine Whitehorn, and I've read Kenneth Tynan. All's well with the world. No more thinking to do for another week. One wonders sometimes whether the Wednesday Play is not completing the same kind of function. 'We've watched tonight's play on the Pill. That's our bit of forward-thinking for this week.' On the other hand, many more people are likely to read something like the *Sunday Express*. They probably watch the play feeling that it's doing them good to know what is going on in the world; and this is alarming, because a playwright's job is to inform people of what is going on in *him*.

In last week's play about the Pill, you had a set problem which was (as indeed was mine) talked out. I think that it would be a tremendous shame if the Wednesday Play, as such, were to fulfil that function alone. I don't think the Wednesday Play would do what the commercials and the serials do, but it might influence the trendy fringes, rather as Armchair Theatre had an effect in the early 60's. Obviously if one is going to be lumbered with a huge *lumpen-middle-class*, then there has got to be an element somewhere knocking around, not to change them, but to give them something to grumble about. Looking at them in their lowest sense of achievement, I feel that the Wednesday Play might possibly do this: to be a necessary irritant to this vast TV sector.

Ideally, TV plays should be plays on TV. I object to these titles: Wednesday Play, Armchair Theatre, and so on. They tend to make a Wednesday type of play. Plays should be called what they are called, but the programmers believe that the audience likes to know what's coming and demand some sort of category to be set before them. It is also bad for the writer in that if you are commissioned to write a play, you are bound to think; 'Ah, what Wednesday Play subjects are there floating around?'

PC: Would you like to see an increase in the number of channels? Would you and your co-writers appreciate more time available, say a channel devoted exclusively to drama? Might they not be able to get away from these rather curbed serial-inducing procedures?

HW: No. Because even if you had another eight channels, the number of writers who can do a reasonable sort of play is severely limited. There are not many unsung geniuses.

PC: If there were more transmission space, might not the play alter?

HW: There should be a lot more repeats. For a TV play to be shown once, and then disappear is awful. I would like to see a channel given over to repeats of, not only plays, but documentaries, anything suitable, anything. There should be not only repeats, but reproductions, and revivals. TV has the greatest potential repertoire of modern drama. Every successful, admired and exciting author has written for TV in the last ten years, and the

richness that could be got from a repeat of all these plays could be tremendous. One could have a tremendous archive.

PC: Do they get wiped?

HW: A lot of them do. Some do not. Also, technical standards change so fast . . . I believe that the BBC are not going to repeat things that are not in colour, which is a shame because there were lots of good plays before 1965. For example, the old Nigel Neale *Quatermass* series which was tremendous, far better than what is being shown now. It is so shocking in quality that it has been rendered technically extinct.

PC: So this ephemerality cannot be overcome?

HW: In certain cases, it is not possible. Mine, for example, was an ephemeral play. It dealt with an issue which is being discussed now, and times will change, and the arguments will of necessity change. I do not mean that I will become outdated in six months but one hopes that developments will make part, or parts, of it irrelevant.

PC: But it is no more ephemeral than, say, a *Times* leader?

HW: No. It is valid as some sort of reflection of the time in which it was written. Often such a play is more valid than any theatre play. Many TV plays are far more interesting and exciting than theatre because the authors know they can write for a specific given time and can really explore, whereas theatre writers are dealing with a much longer period of production and sale. But, about the point you made concerning plays being better with more time. It is a question, actually, of money – not the money the playwright gets, though this comes into it. The beginner playwright will get about £700 for a full-length play, which isn't vast. Also the time taken by a production company in producing the play is limiting. In order to get a better play you should pay the writer more, *and* spend more money on producing it.

PC: Do you think that the fact that the play tends to have this passing, journalistic feel on TV, influences the way in which you write?

HW: It does not necessarily have to have that quality. I have done stuff which is totally un-journalistic and not tied to a specific moment.

PC: I have in mind *Talking To A Stranger*, where something more substantial was tried.

HW: *Talking To A Stranger* had a marvellous basic premise: the idea of the four plays linked in that way (through the eyes of the four protagonists). It was a God-given idea. I would like to think that that sort of exploration of people, rooted in a certain time (but not in a specific month) is the way I would like to see TV drama go . . . what makes people tick, rather than newsworthy items. I do agree that the way TV is run at present, the sort of newsy, controversial play is encouraged.

PC: I felt that you could have done a similar thing with your own play. You generated a social situation which we believed in. You could have followed up the woman in her reactions. Instead she just fled from the studio, weeping. But there was a compassionate interest aroused as to what would happen to her afterwards. You, yourself, have suggested that one could have explored Prockter's personal life, or counterbalanced that against his public performance and his professional in-talk with the producer. Therefore, it seems that your material has more energy than the medium, as now structured, can allow.

HW: Well . . . critically, I would rather have a play which created a lot of energy but which was overmuscular for its frame, rather than three plays which were spread thinly. That didn't happen in *Talking To A Stranger* but it has applied in the past to certain groups of plays by a common author, which have run out of steam. To be fair to the BBC, I think that had I suggested to them a protracted two-part play, they would have been interested. This did not occur to me. A writer's life is full of pressures. One is booked up for the next six months or so. And you tend to think: once I get shot of that one, then I can start on *this* one. And so on.

The script editors and producers often fulfil the function of one's criticism in six months time. If you could write a play now, and then come back to it six months later, and say: well looking at it now I see what is wrong . . . and revise it then, you would probably have a much better play. One has not the *time* to do that; because if you are a successful TV writer, as soon as you have finished a play, it is saleable. The importance of

the producer and the script-editor is to tell *you* very honestly where and how you could do better. One depends on these people. They are of enormous importance to the writer. I have done about sixteen TV plays, and I am sufficiently technically competent to know that I could do something rapidly which could go into rehearsal next week. What you are *producing*, and what they *want* combine to make what can be done.

PC: The medium determines its content?

HW: It is up to the writer to see that it bloody doesn't.

PC: Is there a dialogue in this area? The medium, making certain demands and the playwright making certain counterdemands; and the reconciliation coming out as the play?

HW: Yes, I think so. Apart from technical demands, the difficulty is in giving 'It' what 'It' wants, on the one hand; and giving 'It' what you think *you* can, and want to do. So the writer's development is entirely in his own hands. If you have written half a dozen successful TV plays, you can probably make a living for the rest of your life. But you must exercise a huge amount of self-criticism to make yourself progress, because very few people are going to take the trouble to tell you that you should. One or two do. Some critics are good in this respect, Peter Black, say, can put his finger right on it, sometimes; and so can Philip Purser. They can really make you see what you are up to.

William Friese Greene and the Origins of Cinematography

Brian Coe

His genius bestowed upon humanity the boon of commercial cinematography of which he was the first inventor and patentee.

Those words, on the tomb of William Friese Greene, sum up the claims made on his behalf during the forty years since his death. It is claimed that his patent, No. 10131, of 1889, is the 'master' patent for cinematography; that he was the first person to use perforated, celluloid film for recording and reproducing moving objects; that he was the first person to show projected moving pictures produced photographically; and that directly from his work was derived the cinema of today.

These claims are now re-examined here in the light of information gathered from photographic journals of his time which, in publishing reports of photographic society meetings and details of new devices, show a clear picture of the work of Friese Greene. These contemporary writings, more reliable than the imperfect recollections of ageing people previously recorded, present a different picture of the inventor.

The information has been derived from a close, page by page study of a number of photographic journals published in the 'critical' years, 1885-1896, which immediately preceded the introduction of cinematography as it is known today. Some of these journals are still published: *British Journal of Photography*, *Photographic Journal*, *Amateur Photographer*. Others have survived in a different form: *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal* has become the *Kinematograph Weekly*. They were characterized by a sober attention to detail and reflected the interests of their readers in matters of photographic science of often surprising complexity. The information that they give is as close to the truth as it will be possible to come more than seventy years after the events they describe.

Brian Coe is shortly to take up appointment as Curator of the Kodak Museum. He is at present Tutor in Film Making in the Kodak Education Service

This examination of the achievements of Friese Greene falls into three parts: a survey of his work with, and his demonstrations of, devices for recording and reproducing moving objects; an assessment of his knowledge and ability in matters of photographic science as revealed by his numerous talks and demonstrations; and a critical survey of the claims made for his work, compared with the efforts of other inventors.

I FRIESE GREENE AND THE 'ANIMATED' PICTURE

It is likely that Friese Greene's interest in the problem of producing animated pictures began when he met J. A. R. Rudge, a talented mechanic living in Bath. Rudge, from about 1874, had been working on improvements in the projection of animated lantern slides, which in one form or another had been widely used since the beginning of the century. Two of the most successful forms were the 'Wheel of Life' of Ross, in which a continuously rotating glass disc carried a series of images, successively projected on the screen through a rotating, slotted shutter, and the 'Choreutoscope' of Beale, in which a series of pictures on a slide or disc were moved intermittently behind the projector lens, being uncovered by a shutter when stationary, and covered while moving to the next position. Both of these devices made use of the principle of persistence of vision to achieve the illusion of a moving picture. Rudge's experiments were directed towards the use of two or more projection lenses, so that by a combination of the 'dissolving view' principle, whereby one picture would blend with the next on the screen, with the rapid presentation of a sequence of images, a smooth, effective moving picture would be produced without relying on persistence of vision.

On 12 November 1884, Rudge took protection for one of his designs in a provisional patent, No. 14886, for 'Improvement in the method of showing dissolving views and all kinds of slides, and producing life-like effects with the Optical or Magic Lantern'. He was unable to complete the patent owing to illness. According to Friese Greene's biographer,¹ he first met Rudge in 1880, and would therefore have been very familiar with Rudge's aims and methods. It is likely that the photographer, Friese Greene, became particularly interested in the problem of producing photographs which could be animated by Rudge's apparatus. Friese Greene's first appearance at the Photographic Society of Great Britain (later to become The Royal Photographic

Society) was to show a new camera back. Soon after his arrival in London to open a photographic studio at 69 New Bond Street, he visited a Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society on 24 November 1885, where he 'exhibited a camera back, where twelve films* for negatives could be exposed and changed one after the other. This apparatus consisted of a box with two compartments one above the other, the films in the upper box being brought down into the lower one, placed *in situ*, and removed simply by turning a handle'.²

There is no mention in the report of the meeting of any suggested function for the camera back, but it is possible that it was made by or with Rudge, to obtain series of portrait pictures for Rudge's lantern. Friese Greene was elected a Member of the Photographic Society on 8 December 1885⁴ and from then on attended the Meetings regularly. On 26 January 1886, at a Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society, he 'exhibited and explained a piece of apparatus for use in the optical lantern, designed by Mr. Roger of Bath. In front of four transparencies, four lenses are placed, each one having its optical axis converging to a common centre, and the light coming through the condenser is transmitted, by opaque divisions, into four channels, so that each lens receives its own light, and thus four images can be thrown upon the screen on the same identical spot; but in front of the lenses a revolving diaphragm is attached, which permits only one lens at a time to act, and, by turning this diaphragm, one image after another is thrown upon the screen. In portraits from life, by changing the position of the eyes or other parts of the face in the original negatives, a living motion is given to the image on the screen.'

Friese Greene then described the use of cobalt and copper salts to colour the slide, giving changing colour effects as the pictures became warm. 'A most successful demonstration was then made upon the screen (without the colour experiment) but in consequence of the apparatus being very small,

* 'Films' at this time were paper negative materials; they were described in an article in 1888: 'Film photography is a method of producing the rapid gelatine bromide process negative on paper instead of glass. This method offers the important advantage that, as the support for the sensitive film is extremely light and flexible, it can be used from a roll, and a great many exposures made upon the contents of a single roll holder. After development, the film negatives can be stripped from the paper support, preserved between the leaves of books, and printed from, as well as, and as quickly as, from glass negatives'.³ Several proprietary brands of both roll and sheet paper films were available from the middle 1880's onwards.

the resulting image was also very circumscribed. The Chairman remarked that these matters were very ingenious, and the Meeting was under obligations to Mr. F. Greene for bringing them forward.⁵ The 'Mr. Roger' referred to in the report was, of course, Rudge, as later correspondence confirmed.¹⁰ However, on the next occasion that Friese Greene demonstrated such a projector, Rudge was not mentioned at all. At a Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society, on 23 August 1887, 'Mr. Friese Greene then showed on the white screen the results of an invention he had designed in connection with the lantern, which he designated the "Phantascope"'. A disc was made to revolve in front of some negatives taken of suspended consecutive movements, so that one image appearing after another with a certain rapidity, the persistence of vision assisted the effect, and the result was an apparent continuous motion. A conversation upon what might be done with such an instrument, then took place.⁶

During his next demonstration to the Photographic Society he again made no mention of Rudge. On 22 January 1889, at a Technical Meeting Friese Greene 'showed an appliance for exhibiting a more life-like effect upon the screen, when projected by an optical lantern, than had hitherto been accomplished. The apparatus consisted of a pair of lanterns furnished with a series of portraits of the same person with varying expressions. These portraits were mounted in frames linked together in a sort of endless chain and the pair of chains were actuated by clockwork driven by a heavy weight. On setting the apparatus in motion the portrait in one of the lanterns was covered by a dissolver, and whilst this portrait was hidden, the slide was changed by a movement of the chain, so as to bring another portrait into place. The other lantern objective was then covered, and the portrait behind it changed in the same way. It thus became possible by using a series of gradually changing images to represent the movement of a person when bursting into a laugh, when winking, etc. An addition to the apparatus which it was proposed to use was to photograph the sitter in the act of speaking, showing the movements of the mouth, and at the same time to use a phonograph to record the utterance. The phonogram being fitted up in conjunction with the lantern, the image on the screen might be made to appear to talk. In order to get a perfect representation of motion, Mr. Greene considered it would be necessary to take the photographs at the rate of five in one second . . . Mr. G.

Davidson did not think five photographs in a second was anything like sufficient frequency to secure proper images of any rapidly moving object.⁷ Another journal reported: 'The machinery did not work very well for want of accurate adjustment, but enough was done to occasionally throw life-like motions of the features upon the screen.'⁸ *The Photographic Journal* reported that, 'Mr. Friese Greene said that what he had done was quite in an experimental stage.'⁹ This Meeting, and the reports that followed, immediately provoked a letter from J. A. R. Rudge to *The Photographic News*, a leading journal of the time: 'Sir, in your issue of January 25th, I notice in your report . . . that Mr. Friese Greene showed an appliance for exhibiting a life-like effect on the screen, but he omitted to say who was the originator of an apparatus of that kind. Permit me to say . . . that I am the first inventor of perfect life-like effects in the lantern without the aid of persistence of vision. I sold an apparatus of this kind to Mr. Friese Greene.' He then described briefly his devices and said: 'I have been perfecting this invention for the last fifteen years, and have spent a large amount of labour and expense upon it. I have exhibited it publicly for two years.' He ended by correcting earlier reports referring to him as 'Roger'.¹⁰

In spite of this, a report on the 'Exhibition of Photographic Apparatus and Photographs' at the Crystal Palace in March, 1889, stated: 'Mr. Friese Greene, who is well known as an experimental photographer and lanternist, shows an automatic biunial lantern – or, rather, twin – of his own invention, the slides for which are contained in a sort of chain of carriers.' A brief description followed of the lantern shown at the Photographic Society two months before.¹¹

In order to obtain pictures for use in lanterns of the kind described above, Friese Greene had begun experiments on a camera. Working with Mortimer Evans, a London civil engineer, a camera was produced and patented, the application being made on 21 June 1889. The patent was entitled 'Improved apparatus for taking photographs in rapid series' (No. 10131, 1889) and described a camera with mechanism for exposing a 'roll of any convenient length of sensitized paper or the like', and the accompanying drawings 'represent an embodiment of our Invention in a camera suitable for taking photographic representations of quarter-plate size'. The sensitized material was driven intermittently through the camera by a driving roller worked by a spring and escapement tooth mechanism of somewhat impractical

design. The driving roller had serrated ends, to grip the sensitized material firmly and the patent says: 'One or more of the points of one or each of such discs . . . may be omitted to indicate the places where the divisions of the strip should subsequently be effected, if such should be required to be done before development of the latent photographic representations obtained.' The shutter was a 'simple 'flip-flop' design, with provision for altering its speed of action (hence exposure time) independently of the speed of operation of the mechanism driving the sensitized material. The winch-handle was so geared to the internal mechanism that one turn made two exposures on the film. This would limit the effective speed of the camera to four or five pictures per second. It is obvious from the description of the camera that it was intended to be used to obtain short sequences of pictures, at a relatively slow speed, which, either before or after development, would be cut-up, printed and mounted as lantern slides for use in the Rudge-type lantern already described. The size of the individual pictures – quarter-plate – helps to confirm this.

The first time that this camera was shown was at a meeting of the London and Provincial Photographic Association, on 5 September 1889. Friese Greene read a paper and introduced various 'novelties', saying: 'we are not beaten in everything, not even by our American cousins, for here is a camera with one movement constructed to take three or four pictures a second by simply turning a handle, a thing which has never been accomplished before.' He then showed 'A brass model of the working parts of a detective camera . . . This he had designed specially for taking a rapid series of moving objects with one lens and camera, the number of pictures being limited only by the length of film provided – as many as 300 might be taken with a single roll-holder at the rate of six in a second, simply by turning a handle!'¹²

The editor of *The Photographic Review*, Thomas Bolas, on 19 October 1889, briefly described the camera and reported Friese Greene's proposals for it: 'As several hundreds – or, indeed, thousands – of photographs may thus be taken in uninterrupted sequence we may soon have such lantern exhibitions as continuous representations of street life from a given point. Indeed, Mr. Greene promises us as wide a departure from the old lines of photography as Mr. Muybridge when he showed us the horse and other animals on the screen.' He concluded by saying that he hoped to be able

to illustrate and describe the camera mechanism in a later issue.¹³

The next mention of the camera appeared in *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal* on 15 November 1889. This often-quoted article was entitled: 'A startling optical novelty: Photoramic and Phonophotoramic Effects.'

'It would doubtless seem strange if upon a screen a portrait (head) of a person were projected, and this picture slowly became of an animated character, opened its mouth, and began to talk, accompanied by an ever-changing countenance, including the formation of the mouth as each peculiar sound is uttered; or if instead of one head, two were produced, and an argument gone through with all the turns and twists of the head incidental to such.

'It would also appear curious to have a street scene depicted on the screen, and for the spectators to witness the various horses and vehicles running past in all directions, persons walking to and fro, and dogs running along, all at varying speeds and with life-like motion . . .

'Strange as this may seem, it is now an accomplished fact, and the optical lantern will shortly be considered a *sine qua non* as a recording instrument. . . .

'The name of Friese Greene the eminent photographer of Brook Street, W., will become familiar throughout the land in connection with an invention by which all these effects can be produced. He has invented a peculiar kind of camera . . .

'This instrument is pointed at a particular moving object, and by turning the handle several photographs are taken every second. These are converted to transparencies, and placed in succession upon a long strip, which is wound on rollers and passed through a lantern of peculiar construction (also the invention of Mr. Friese Greene) and by its agency projected upon the screen.

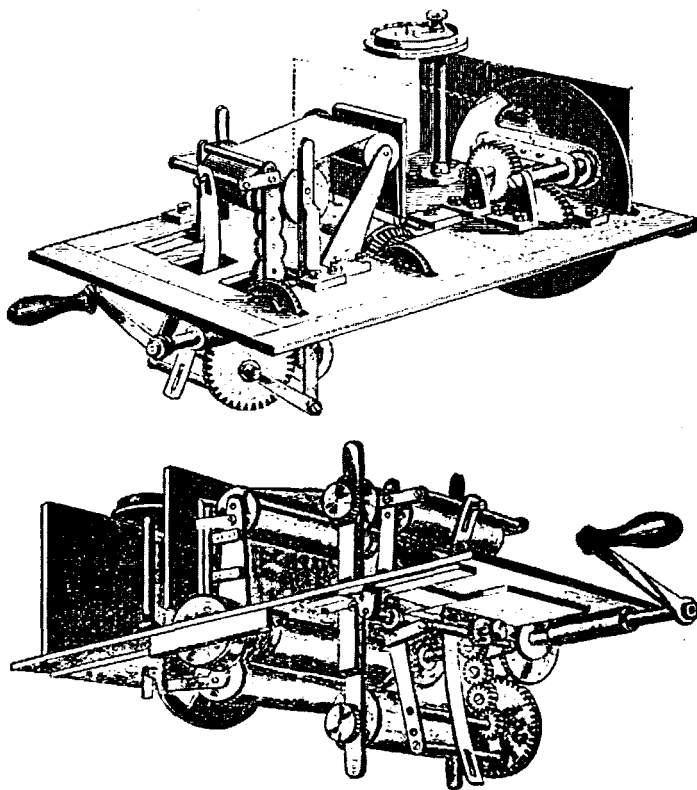
' . . . In our next issue we hope to be able to give full particulars, with drawing, of this wonderful instrument, or rather combination of instruments. We have seen and examined the camera and can vouch for its doing all that is here stated.'¹⁴

Other journals commented on this article. The *Photographic Art Journal* said: 'It is difficult to see how all that . . . [Friese Greene] . . . proposes to do is to be attained, judging from the description of the instrument as given . . . The description furnished, however, does not suggest that such

mechanism is provided as would be necessary for the very rapid and long-sustained revolutions of such a plan. . . . Well, we must wait and see.¹⁵ 'Sayings and Doings' in *The Camera* said: 'A brief and somewhat incredulous notice of Mr. Friese Greene's latest novelty has been going the round of the daily papers . . . taken from our young contemporary.' (This latter was, of course, *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal*.) The article goes on to mention the camera and series of negatives 'from which lantern slide transparencies are to be made. These are placed in proper order upon an endless band, and being passed through a specially constructed lantern the figures are projected upon a screen.'¹⁶

The following issue of *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal* said: 'Just before going to press we have been particularly requested by Mr. Friese Greene to delay publishing the description of his camera until after its exhibition at the Royal Society, by which time all patent arrangements will have been completed.'¹⁷ The February, 1890, edition of the same journal said: 'We are in receipt of a number of inquiries about Mr. Friese Greene's photoramic apparatus. If by our next issue the patent rights have been arranged for foreign countries, we hope to give particulars of the same.'¹⁸

However, it was *The Photographic News* which first brought details and pictures of the camera to the photographic public. On 28 February 1890, this journal published a two-page article on 'A machine camera taking ten photographs a second.'¹⁹ It describes the camera 'invented by Mr. Friese Greene and Mr. Mortimer Evans, civil engineer'. After describing the work of Muybridge, and discussing possible scientific uses of such a camera, the article gives details of the camera and its construction: 'Its exterior dimensions are 8 in. by 9 in. by 9¼ in. Mr. Mortimer Evans has recently improved upon this, by making a modified form of the instrument for popular rather than scientific use: this smaller camera is little larger than a "kodak", and will take a hundred consecutive pictures by the turning of a handle.' The article goes on to give details of the mechanism, obviously derived from the patent description, and illustrates the external appearance of the camera, together with two views of the mechanism (Fig. 1). Friese Greene's earlier demonstration of the 'Phantascope' lantern is described, 'invented by an acquaintance of his in the west of England. By an improvement upon that lantern, now in course of manufacture, Mr. Greene hopes to be able to reproduce upon the screen, by means of photographs taken with his machine



camera, street scenes full of life and motion; also to represent a man making a speech, with all the changes in his countenance, and, at the same time, to give the speech itself in the actual tones of the man's voice by means of a loud-speaking phonograph.'

On 25 February 1890, Friese Greene gave a talk, 'Photography in an Age of Movement', to the Annual Meeting of the Bath Photographic Society. He exhibited the camera, and said: 'It will be able to investigate all the movements of the spider making its web, or a cloud as it forms because you can take 600 pictures in a minute on one continuous roll of film, by merely turning a handle. When I first saw a roll of paper go through at the rate of ten a second, and stop an instant when each exposure was made, I felt like a child over new toys, though I was as sanguine as possible notwithstanding there was a slight feeling within me of doubt if it would really go on doing it. I think my enthusiasm was more than usual over such things. Mr. Mortimer Evans has improved and improved upon it so much that I am

Fig. 1. Mechanism of the first 'machine' camera; from *The Photographic News*, 28 February 1890.

Fig. 2 (*right*). Three frames of film exposed in the 'machine' camera.



positive the result will have a tendency to bring forward a new kind of photography; in fact it will make an epoch which will be immensely interesting, for the movements of the centipede, the vibrations of the heart, will have to submit to its power of rapid delineation . . . Both instruments and examples shown were regarded with much interest.²⁰ Another report stated: '600 pictures a minute can be taken on a continuous band of sensitive celluloid or other material. Briefly, the band is made to pass beneath a shutter, halting for every exposure. This can be regulated from 1/1000th of a second to a second. The camera was shown in action, and the interior mechanism resembled somewhat that of a Thomson telegraph instrument.'²¹

The improvements made by Mortimer Evans, referred to by Friese Greene at the Bath Photographic Society meeting, were the subject of a patent applied for by Evans on 8 March 1890, as 'Improvements in or applicable to photographic cameras', patent No. 3730, 1890. Referring to the earlier joint patent with Friese Greene, Evans describes improved intermittent mechanisms for transporting the sensitive film.

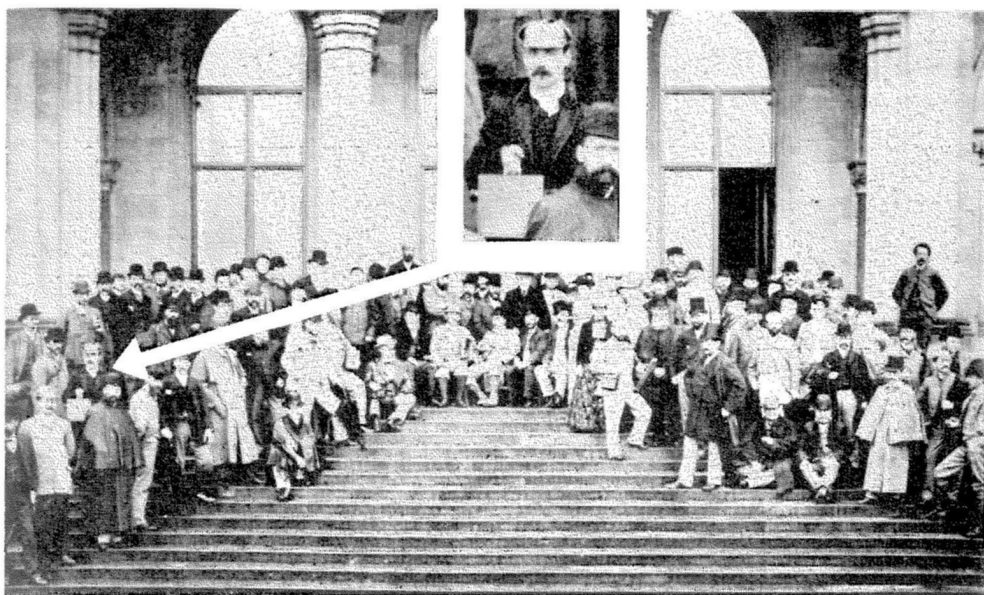
The April, 1890, issue of *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal* at last published details of the 'photoramic' camera, largely in the form of a re-write of the earlier article in *The Photographic News*.¹⁹ It went on to say: 'Transparencies from negatives thus obtained are passed through two lanterns, supplied with suitable mechanism for rapidly placing them in position. By a "cut-off" in the rays of light, the one picture is rapidly merged into another, the changing taking place during the moment in which the rays of light are cut off.'²²

The camera was demonstrated again at the Photographic Society Ordinary Meeting on 15 April 1890: 'Mr. Friese Greene showed a camera for photographing phases of motion. A long roll of sensitive film on celluloid was unwound and rewound by the turning of a handle and kept stationary for a minute interval of time, during which the exposure was made. It was stated that it could be worked to take ten successive photographs in a second of time. Developed strips of the celluloid many yards in length were exhibited, as well as prints therefrom.'²³ At the next Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society, during a discussion on handling celluloid films, Friese Greene said 'he had developed flexible films of very great length, some twenty

feet, by using long dishes made of Willesden paper. . . . He also showed a series of eighty pictures, taken very rapidly, of some people walking, where the progress in movement had only been about one foot.'²⁴

A final confirmation that the camera was intended for the production of lantern slides for a Rudge projector came on 28 May 1890, when, at Bath Photographic Society, J. A. R. Rudge demonstrated 'in action the machine which he has invented and named "Biphantascope"'.²⁵ An illustrated report in *The Photographic News* described a two-lens lantern, carrying two discs, each with six pictures, projected on the screen by moving the lamp and condenser alternately behind each disc. 'The machine exhibited by Mr. Rudge . . . was not quite finished . . . it served, however, to explain the principles involved. He is making this machine for Mr. Greene.'²⁶

Late in 1889 or early in 1890, it appears that Friese Greene made the acquaintance of Frederick Varley, a London engineer interested in photography. They began working together, the first result of their collaboration being a joint patent for a photometer, applied for on 25 March 1890 (B.P. 4622, 1890). The following day, F. H. Varley applied for a patent for 'Improvements in cameras for photographing objects in motion'. The specification describes 'certain improvements in or applicable to cameras used for photographing objects in motion, such cameras being adapted to be used, among other purposes, for obtaining good negatives sufficiently near each other in time to convey the idea of life and motion when successive positives from them are projected at the same speed upon a screen by means of a suitable lantern'. The patent (B.P. 4704, 1890) describes two mechanisms using a cam-operated rocking lever which, once per exposure, bore on the film, pulling through the exposing aperture a length of film equal to the height of one picture. One of the two designs was for a stereoscopic camera, which had a removable back so 'as to permit of the camera being used for obtaining enlargements or projecting on a screen strips of translucent positives (obtained from the strips of negatives obtained by the aforesaid operation of the camera) sufficiently near each other, in time, to convey the idea of life and motion'. The design of Varley's cameras was mechanically much more sound than that of Friese Greene and Evans. The film employed in this machine was over seven inches wide, carrying pairs of stereoscopic images each approximately 3¼ inches square.



The Photographic Convention of the United Kingdom, held annually, was in 1890 held at Chester (Fig. 3). From 23–27 June photographers from all over the country gathered for lectures, demonstrations, excursions and social activities. In giving details of the programme, *The Photographic News*, on 20 June, said: ‘From another source information comes that Mr. Friese Greene will exhibit one or more of the new cameras for taking a considerable number of photographs of moving objects per second, as well as one or two other interesting pieces of mechanism. The lantern machines for projecting the said photographs on a screen are at present defective, but are likely to be all right in a few weeks time.’²⁷

Fig. 3. Friese Greene, with the first ‘machine’ camera, at the Photographic Convention, 1890; from *The British Journal of Photography*, 25 July 1890.

On 26 June, *The Photographic News* reported, Friese Greene exhibited to the Convention a new photometer, ‘the invention of Mr. Frederick Varley’. He also exhibited ‘a new camera, a great improvement upon the one described a few months ago in these pages . . . invented by Mr. Friese Greene and Mr. Mortimer Evans . . . The later camera, first publicly exhibited at the Chester Convention by Mr. Friese Greene, was the invention of Mr. Frederick Varley.’ A brief description of the camera patented by Varley followed.²⁸ Another report, in *The British Journal of Photography*, said: ‘Mr. Friese Greene followed with the following paper entitled “Suggestions”, of which, however, he read only the opening

sentences.' After mentioning the camera the report continued: 'Negatives taken by its agency were shown in the form of a long ribbon of celluloid or something very like it, impressed with quite a large number of negatives. The apparatus or lantern by which these were to have been thrown upon the screen having suffered some derangement in the course of its transit to Chester, the audience were deprived of the opportunity of witnessing the full effects intended to be produced.'²⁹ *The Practical Photographer* carried this report: 'After this Mr. Friese Greene read a rambling and somewhat disjointed paper entitled "Suggestions" in which, so far as we could make out, he did not suggest anything new; and in the course of which he showed the film from his magazine camera, with which he can work exposures (theoretically at any rate) up to the rate of 600 a minute.'³⁰

On 30 September, at a Technical Meeting of the Photographic Society, Friese Greene, in the chair, introduced Varley, who 'showed a stereoscopic camera arranged for the production of successive negatives at a rapid rate. Mr. Friese Greene had with this camera taken a long roll of negatives on stripping film at the rate of from three to five in a second and so secured various phases of motion. The mechanism of the camera was shown.'³¹

At the London and Provincial Photographic Association meeting on 27 November 1890, Friese Greene and Varley demonstrated the camera, Varley reading a paper on 'A Camera for taking consecutive pictures of objects in motion' in which he referred to Friese Green's earlier work.³² It is clear that Friese Greene had used the camera, invented and patented by Varley, to expose the strips of negative film which were demonstrated at these meetings.

The beginning of 1891 saw Friese Greene in serious financial trouble which resulted in the cessation of his experimental work for some time. The last recorded occasion when he and Varley appeared together was at Lord Rayleigh's lecture 'Some Applications of Photography' at the Royal Institution. Among other items on view in the library were 'Stereoscopic lantern and camera combined - camera for taking pictures from 3 to 10 a second - direct reading photometer - photographs of clouds: Mr. Friese Greene and Mr. Varley.'³³

From this time until 1895 Friese Greene's name disappears from the photographic press - at least in this context. It is likely that his apparatus was sold during bankruptcy pro-

ceedings; certainly one of his cameras was in the hands of Paul Lange, President of Liverpool Amateur Photographic Association, by 30 April 1891, when he showed it to a meeting of the Association.³⁴

There was one last 'invention' to be patented, however. On 29 November 1893, Friese Greene applied for a patent for 'Improvements in Apparatus for Exhibiting Panoramic, Dissolving, or Changing Views, and in the Manufacture of Slides for Use therewith'. (B.P. 22954, 1893). The specification describes a camera-projector, with two lenses, for taking and showing animated scenes, identical in almost every respect with that patented by Varley three years before. Comparison of the drawings accompanying the two patents shows an astonishing resemblance between the two (Fig. 4). The patent also contains a reference to the use of 'sympathetic' substances – cobalt and copper salts – which change colour under heat and can thus be used to produce colour effects in projected lantern slides. The patent is not a

Fig. 4a. Drawing from Varley's patent specification, No. 4704, 1890.

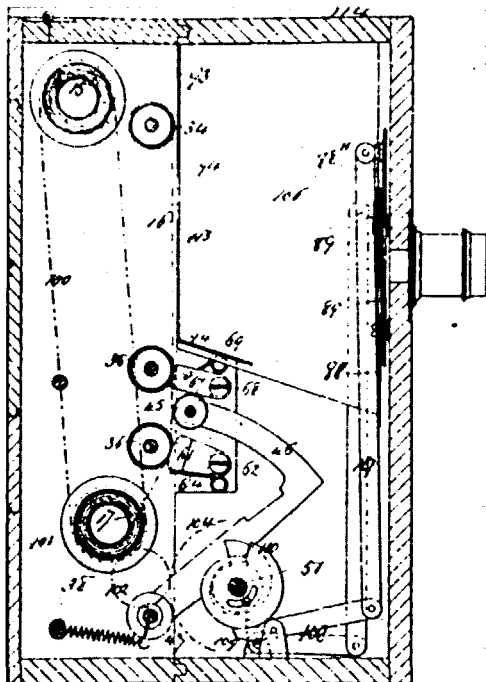
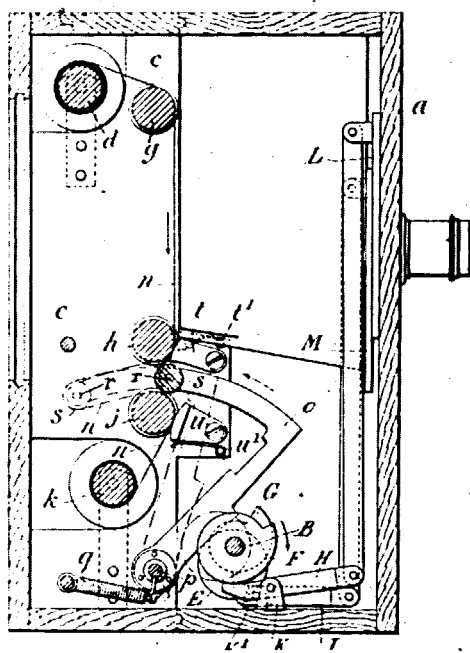


Fig. 4b. Drawing from Friese Greene's patent specification, No. 22954, 1893.



model of clarity, and contains some curious suggestions. For instance: 'In carrying out my invention the film may when taking the series of images be continuously drawn through and a revolving shutter be used so as to give intermittent exposure. The film on being developed will not show a series of distinct photographs but it will show a bleared mass. By using the same instrument as a lantern it will be found that by throwing this film (containing a bleared mass) on to the screen the objects will come out as they appear to the eye in actual life. In adopting this course I prefer to insert a piece of pale green glass in the lens, as I find that the image is more defined when subsequently thrown on the screen.' It is likely that, by concentrating on the theatrical uses of the apparatus – producing moving or coloured effects – the patent passed any scrutiny there might have been for prior invention. Had it been more openly described as a camera for photographing moving objects, it is unlikely that it would have been granted.

Friese Greene's work in the years before the introduction of cinematography falls into three phases. From about 1885 to 1889 he worked with and demonstrated the 'Phantascope' and 'Bio-Phantascope' lanterns of Rudge. During 1889 he worked with Mortimer Evans on the development of a camera to take pictures in rapid sequence for the Rudge lanterns; the patent No. 10131 of June 1889 was for such a camera. During 1890 he worked with F. H. Varley, whose camera and projector had been patented in March, 1890. His only work carried on without collaboration resulted in the patent No. 22954 of 1893, which describes apparatus identical with that of Varley. The significance of this work in relation to that of other inventors will be discussed later.

This article will be continued in the May–June issue.

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Robin Wood — A Dissenting View

Alan Lovell

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, film criticism in this country was forced to examine its current attitudes and assumptions. The examination was begun by Lindsay Anderson and continued by the *Movie* group of critics. Anderson suggested that the critic should operate on the basis of clearly defined values to which he should be resolutely committed. Coming from quite a different direction, the *Movie* critics argued for a shift in critical interest which was, roughly speaking, from the realistic documentary tradition in the cinema (embracing Italian Neo-realism, the Soviet silent cinema and the British documentary movement) to a cinema which was more preoccupied with form and artifice (principally the American cinema and especially directors like Hitchcock and Hawks). They also put more emphasis on developing a critical vocabulary, introducing concepts like 'auteur' and 'mise en scene' to this country.

The critical scene today does not suggest that this examination had much effect. The ideas that Anderson and the *Movie* critics attacked still control critical writing about the cinema. Criticism is still principally a matter of expressing a personal taste that needs no other justification than that it is considered to be a superior taste; an impressionistic account of the critic's immediate response to a film is still the characteristic method; no critical vocabulary has been developed; amateurism is still a matter of pride.

Not only has the challenge put forward ten years ago failed but the people responsible for it have dispersed. Anderson and people associated with him have become film-makers exclusively – Anderson's own occasional critical forays are ignored; for example, the total lack of response to his attempt to challenge Eric Rhode's article about the British cinema in a recent issue of *The Listener*.

The *Movie* critics have either disappeared (the magazine itself only appears in a fitful irregular way) or been absorbed

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into the critical establishment; for example, its editor, Ian Cameron, has become the critic of *Queen* and now appears in the company of his former opponents on the back of the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Mark Shivas is the front man for the mediocre television programme about films, 'Cinema'.

This background must be borne in mind to understand properly Robin Wood's achievement as a critic. Through his occasional writings and the three books he has now published, *Hitchcock's Films*, *Howard Hawks* and *Arthur Penn*, Wood has sustained the challenge set up by Lindsay Anderson and the *Movie* group. This is an odd claim to make, perhaps, because in many ways the two positions were opposed ones: Anderson being both more attached to the realistic/documentary tradition and also more suspicious of the effects of the Hollywood system than the *Movie* group were. Wood himself (as the subjects of his books suggest) has always been close to the *Movie* group. But he has been set apart from most of its members by his involvement with the critical attitudes and methods of F. R. Leavis; this involvement has given him the firm attachment to a set of values that Anderson demanded of the critic.

This marrying of the two traditions is important in itself. But Robin Wood added another element which seems to me to be of tremendous importance for British film criticism. This was the determination only to write about a subject after a long and sustained involvement with it. This determination gives his criticism a depth and seriousness that has never been a feature of British film criticism. This quality can best be established by comparing his book on Howard Hawks with John Russell Taylor's *Cinema Eye*, *Cinema Ear*, which I think can fairly be taken as an example of the orthodox approach to film criticism. Any one of John Russell Taylor's essays suggest that he has seen most of the director's films once or twice, read the relevant literature and on the basis of this written the essay. Any of Robin Wood's books suggest that he has seen as many of Hawks's films as he possibly could, as often as possible, discussed the films with friends and colleagues, mulled over what they have had to say, read the relevant literature and then written his book. The result is that in Taylor's case his essays never show a particular familiarity with any of the directors he discusses so that his criticism is never particularized and tends to be a summary of current opinion about a director. In Wood's case there is an easy familiarity with Hawks's work that allows him to range right across the director's work, com-

paring a wide variety of films; in all the judgements that he makes about Hawks there is the sense that whether they follow current opinion or not they have been personally arrived at. (In comparing *Cinema Eye*, *Cinema Ear* with *Howard Hawks* I am comparing a book of essays with a monograph. I do not think this invalidates the comparison. Taylor's level of critical involvement naturally leads to the essay. I think he would be very hard put to it to sustain a monograph.)

I hope I have given sufficient indication of Robin Wood's achievement as a critic since I want to devote the rest of this article to some criticisms of his position. Not least of his critical virtues is the way he forces other critics to confront his judgements and sort out their own ideas.

The central problem that Robin Wood's critical writings provoke is that of critical method. His method is essentially that developed by F. R. Leavis and his followers and for that reason difficult to come to terms with. This is because there is, inherent in the Leavisian position, a suspicion of the critical act which springs from a fundamental assumption about a work of art. The great work of art (the only one that Leavis thinks the critic should concern himself with) is great because of its 'organic quality'. Criticism seeks to break down the organic quality of the work in an attempt to understand and evaluate it. The tension set up by this contradiction is never resolved in Leavis. Its signs are revealed in Robin Wood's writings by remarks which are scattered throughout his work like 'Interpretative criticism has an inherent tendency to schematize and it is precisely scenes like this that can easily become coarsened in the process of analysis'.

The result is a critical method which avoids developing an analytic and evaluative apparatus. The method as it emerges in the practical criticism of Leavis and his followers can be characterized as follows. Confronted by a work of art, the critic submerges himself in it (close reading, repeated re-readings); he consequently 'apprehends' the work of art and is in a position to interpret and evaluate it. His interpretation has weight because of the attention he has devoted to the work, because of his general knowledge of the art and because of his sensitivity. Essentially the critic is a more sensitive and knowledgeable 'common reader'.

A number of issues are dramatized when one disagrees with an interpretation offered by a Leavisian critic. How can a

disagreement be settled? The natural way would be to ask how judgements had been arrived at, e.g. what assumptions were made, and how were they applied. One might find that critics who disagreed over a work had arrived at different conclusions because they started from different assumptions or had applied them differently. But such a procedure isn't easy to follow with a Leavisian critic, who will find it difficult to articulate his assumptions and the way in which he has applied them.

Leavisian critics have normally avoided this issue by arguing that criticism does not demonstrate but seeks to gain assent. 'This is so, isn't it?' is the question that criticism should always provoke in this view. But, as Perry Anderson points out in an article in the *New Left Review*,² 'The central precondition of this epistemology – the interrogative statement – demands one crucial precondition: a shared, stable system of beliefs and values. Without this no loyal exchange and report is possible. If the basic formation and outlook of readers diverges, their experience will be incommensurable'. Once this happens disagreement inevitably moves to the level of rival assertions.

The central precondition of the method that Anderson points to: 'a shared stable system of beliefs and values', is missing in film criticism. There is no agreement as to who are the important artists, no consensus about critical method, no agreement about the crucial relationship of which the artist and the industrial system of which he is part; film critics even lack the social cement of a university community.

Too often I am confronted by a sense of nothing more than critical assertions. I am puzzled by Robin Wood's conclusions and the way he reaches them. This dissatisfaction occurs at two important critical levels, that of value judgements and that of interpretation.

The difficulty of justifying value judgements can be seen by referring to Robin Wood's comparison between *Rio Bravo* and *High Noon*. He writes: 'It (*High Noon*) strikes me as the archetypal "Oscar" film, product of the combined talents of the archetypal "Oscar" director (Zinneman), the archetypal "Oscar" writer (Carl Foreman) and the archetypal "Oscar" producer (Stanley Kramer): three gentlemen whose work has been characterized by those Good Intentions with which we understand the road to Hell to be paved. *Mental* intentions, not emotional or intuitive inten-

tions: intentions of the conscious willing mind, not of the whole man. The film reeks of contrivance. Every sequence is constructed to lead up to, and make, a simple moral point, character, action and dialogue being painstakingly manipulated to this end. Nowhere is there that sense of inner logic, of *organic* development, of the working out of natural processes through the interaction of the characters, that one finds in the best films of Hawks. This characteristic is not only in the script. Zinneman's direction, external and shallow, matches it perfectly. His handling of the actors is almost universally abominable, cliché gesture following cliché gesture . . . just as cliché set-up follows cliché set-up in the camera positioning'.³ This passage would hardly persuade somebody who thought *High Noon* a good film. It is no more than a mixture of abuse and assertion.

Robin Wood is in fact aware of the problem posed by comparisons like this. At the end of this comparison he writes 'Judgements of this kind are notoriously difficult to enforce when dealing with the cinema (how great an advantage the literary critic has in being able to quote!): one has to appeal not only to the reader's *common experience* (my italics) but to his memory of that experience'. The phrase 'appeal . . . to the common experience' is the crucial one since it takes us back to Perry Anderson's critique of the Leavisian method. If there is no common experience, all the quoting in the world will not support Wood's judgement.

The issue also arises when an interpretation is offered. Take Wood's account of the hero of *North by Northwest*, Roger Thornhill, as an example. After describing how the film characterizes Thornhill at the beginning (irresponsible, a heavy drinker, divorcee, mother dominated, etc.), Wood goes on: 'Indeed he is a man who lives purely on the surface, refusing all commitment or responsibility (appropriately he is in advertising), immature for all his cocksureness, his life all the more a chaos for the fact that he doesn't recognize it as such: a man who relies above all on the exterior trappings of modern civilization – business offices, cocktail bars, machines – for protection, who substitutes bustle and speed for a sense of direction or purpose: a modern city Everyman, whose charm and self-confidence and smartness makes him especially easy for the spectator to identify with . . .'

In a passage like this Wood moves from description that is uncontroversial – we are told in the film that Thornhill is a heavy drinker, etc. – to moral/social estimates of the

character that need substantiating ('immature', 'his life a chaos'). I see no evidence in the film that Hitchcock invites us to make such a judgement of Thornhill and Wood quotes none. Nor can I see evidence to suggest that Thornhill should be regarded as 'a modern city Everyman' rather than just a smart advertising man. This point is of some importance because in the rest of his account Wood puts some stress on Thornhill's representative quality ('... the film's first movement is devoted to a systematic stripping away of the protective armour of a modern city man . . . 'In the midst of this he stands, an isolated speck with the whole world against him, absolutely exposed and vulnerable: modern man deprived of all his amenities and artificial resources') and clearly part of his high estimate of the film depends on the representative quality it has for him. There may be evidence to support this account, but it is not given. It cannot be taken for granted that there is one 'correct' way to read the film.

There are other points in Wood's writings where similar issues are raised: for example, when he says of the opening of *Vertigo* that we never know how Scotty manages to extricate himself when hanging over the gutter has the effect of 'leaving him metaphorically suspended over a great abyss'; or in his accounts of the effect of Hitchcock's use of back projection. But I hope by now that the issue is clear.

Robin Wood's critical method raises two issues: how do critics substantiate (a) value judgements (b) interpretations they offer. I am inclined to think that the issue of interpretation is the one that critics should concern themselves with at the moment as the most likely area to produce developments in criticism. The problem of substantiating value judgements is a notoriously difficult one. In the cinema I think it is best left until we have a much better sense of the nature and limits of the art.

If this is accepted, along what lines could interpretative method be developed in film criticism? On the basis of recent critical writing, I am sure that the 'auteur' principle provides the most useful line of development. However, since the principle has been used in rather different ways, it is necessary to clarify what I mean by it. By the 'auteur' principle I understand a descriptive method which seeks to establish, not whether a director is a great director, but what the basic structure of a director's work is. The assumption behind this principle is that any director creates his:

films on the basis of a central structure and that all of his films can be seen as variations or developments of it.

I think I can best demonstrate the value of the principle by confronting my view of Arthur Penn arrived at on the basis of it with Robin Wood's view. But first a further clarification is necessary in the light of Robin Wood's seeming use of the 'auteur' principle in his account of Hawks.

Wood's book on Hawks is in outline organized around the 'auteur' principle. That is, Hawks's career is not followed chronologically. The films are grouped together on the basis of thematic resemblances. Thus, a Western, *Rio Bravo*, is grouped with two adventure films, *Only Angels Have Wings* and *To Have and Have Not*; a gangster film, *Scarface*, is grouped with comedies like *Monkey Business* and *Bringing Up Baby*. To put seemingly disparate films together like this is a useful critical act in that it immediately provokes the question why and puts an onus on the critic to answer.

However, Robin Wood's use of this method is qualified in a number of ways. Even along the lines I've described it is not a complete attachment. In a minor way it is abandoned at the end of the book, which is chronological in organization, so that the last chapter but one deals with *Hatari*, *Man's Favourite Sport* and *Red Line 7000* and the last chapter deals with *El Dorado*, Hawks's latest film.

More important, the films are grouped together not only on the basis of thematic resemblances but also on the basis of the estimate wood has made of their quality. So *Only Angels Have Wings*, *To Have and Have Not* and *Rio Bravo* go together and are dealt with first because Wood regards them as Hawks's masterpieces. The other chapters move down the scale from the masterpieces to the failures (relegated to an appendix). This is an important difference in our use of the auteur principle. My use would be exclusively on the basis of thematic resemblances and would totally ignore questions of quality. I might well have included *The Big Sleep* under the heading 'Self Respect and Responsibility' but Wood doesn't because he regards it as a failure.

Important too is the way Wood groups the films on the basis of their thematic resemblances. The groupings are on the basis of particular resemblances like Self Respect and Responsibility, The Group, The Instinctive Consciousness and The Lure of Irresponsibility. When examined these terms reveal themselves not simply as descriptive terms but

also as evaluative ones. Wood is saying not just that the films express these themes but that the films are good by virtue of so doing.

To understand what is at stake in this procedure, it is necessary to refer back to a basic assumption of Leavisian critical method: that one of the conditions for a work of art to be great is that it should express central moral values. They are not usually defined explicitly but as they emerge from Leavisian critical writing they might be characterized as the central values of English non-conformity as they appeared in the early part of the twentieth century with the particular emphasis and distortion put on them by D. H. Lawrence.

On examinations the terms under which Robin Wood groups Hawks's films can be seen to refer to these values. A term like 'The Instinctive Consciousness' is characteristically Leavisian and refers back to the psychology created by Lawrence. 'The Lure of Irresponsibility' refers to the Leavisian/Lawrentian assumption of 'the split between the rational and the instinctive, the civilized and the primitive'. (Needless to say Leavis and Lawrence are not the only people to have discerned this split.) 'Self Respect and Responsibility' is defined within the same framework. Defining the essential condition for a man to have self respect, Wood uses the characteristically Leavisian formulation 'such a man should be a conscious being who lives from his own feeling sense of identity'.

The result of this way of grouping is that Hawks is presented as being very close in outlook to those novelists Leavis deals with in *The Great Tradition*. (Significantly Hawks's work is compared with Conrad's at several points.) The accounts of Hitchcock and Penn assimilate them to the same outlook. All three directors are assimilated into a perspective that might be described as Leavis with a Conradian (rather than Lawrentian) bias – that is a view of the world which sees the individual as confronted by the forces of darkness in the universe and trying to maintain his equipoise, integrity and honour.

The assumption that there are a set of absolute values that all great artists will express even if they work in very different social and cultural contexts seems to me a metaphysical assumption that is difficult to sustain. But I am not concerned here to challenge it but to demonstrate a difference in critical method. Robin Wood's grouping of Hawks's films

springs from treating each film as a separate entity. It is only when each film has been separately interpreted that similarities on the basis of a concern with 'Self Respect and Responsibility' or 'The Lure of Irresponsibility' could be discerned between *Rio Bravo* and *To Have and Have Not* or *Scarface* and *I Was a Male War Bride*. They are certainly not obvious on the surface.

Using the same assumption as Robin Wood that there is implicit in a director's work a view of the world (the starting point of the auteur principle) I would employ a different critical method. I should begin by noting the recurrent, overt features of a director's work. My own consideration of Hawks's work would begin with the notion of the group which seems to be a central feature of a large number of his films and go on to explore how Hawks defines the group, on what basis people are excluded from or included in it, the relationship of the woman to the group, the critique of the leader of the group, etc.

However, this approach is perhaps best considered in relation to Arthur Penn's films since they are few in number and therefore more amenable to discussion than Hawks's large output is in an article of this kind.

Any consideration of Penn's films in terms of recurring situations must begin by pairing *Bonnie and Clyde* with *The Left Handed Gun*. The central situations of both films are much the same. The heroes are young people who act in an impromptu, high-spirited way which tends towards violence. Their spontaneous acts of violence provoke a counter response from the society they have acted against and they themselves finally become victims of this counter violence which usually operates at a more intense pitch than the violence of the heroes. In both films the violent response to the heroes is a general social response – both films give the sense that society is easily provoked into violence. But in *The Left Handed Gun* the response is more particularized through the character, Pat Garrett, who leads the final hunt for Billy and eventually kills him.

Once the situation is put like this it becomes apparent that there is a Pat Garrett figure in *Bonnie and Clyde*. He is the Texas Ranger, Hamer. Like Pat Garrett, he leads the final hunt for the heroes and is responsible for their deaths. Hamer acts because of the way he has been humiliated by Bonnie and Clyde; Garrett acts because of the way he feels he has been humiliated by Billy's disruption of his wedding.

At this point a further consideration needs to be introduced. In *The Left Handed Gun*, Garrett is linked with the rancher, Tunstall. At the beginning of the film Tunstall is presented as playing the role of a father to Billy (who is an orphan), encouraging and guiding him, teaching him to read. When Tunstall is murdered Billy reacts as a son might to the murder of his father. But with the disappearance of Tunstall, Garrett takes over the father's role, encouraging and guiding him in turn. In the light of this I think it would be reasonable to see the subsequent relationship between Billy and Garrett in the Freudian terms suggested by the Billy/Tunstall relationship. Billy's disrupting of the wedding is a son's act of rebellion against his father and it provokes a father's retribution.

If Billy's relationship with Garrett is seen in this way, Hamer's response to Bonnie and Clyde is more comprehensible. Taking the film on its own terms, it is difficult to see why Hamer should come after Bonnie and Clyde in the first place and why he should pursue them with such determination and finally unleash such violence against them. If Hamer is seen in the same context as Garrett, e.g. he is a disguised father figure, his behaviour is more intelligible. In support of this it should be added that Bonnie has a mother in the film but no father, while Clyde seems to have no surviving parents. (I am not sure if we are given any explicit information about them in the film.)

If these similarities can be established between the central situations of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Left Handed Gun*, how can these films be related to other Penn films? *The Miracle Worker*, with its central situation of a deaf and dumb girl being taught to come to terms with world, seems to be built round a very different situation. But if our attention is shifted from Helen Keller's age and afflictions to her behaviour, I think we can see some important similarities become visible. Like Bonnie and Clyde, Helen behaves in an uncontrolled, impulsive way. Like them her behaviour disrupts the social situation of which she is a part (in this case the family). Indeed I think we could characterize Helen, Billy, Bonnie and Clyde as being unsocialized people – that is they have not learnt to adapt and control their behaviour to harmonize with their social situations.

These similarities can be made even clearer if they are explored by way of Robin Wood's comparison of *The Left Handed Gun* with the *Miracle Worker*. He suggests that Billy is very close to Annie Sullivan:

'The sense of someone driven on by intense personal needs he or she very imperfectly understands is as vivid in *The Miracle Worker* as it is in *The Left Handed Gun*. Along with their blindness (Wood suggests that Billy is symbolically blind), Billy and Annie share an obsessive single mindedness of purpose'. I think that the two central points of this comparison are open to challenge. It could just as easily be suggested that Annie does understand her own motives (the relating of Helen to her brother, and to her own struggle) and that this self knowledge gives her the strength to cope with Helen. And surely the plot of *The Left Handed Gun* suggests that Billy's initial single mindedness is dissipated; the deliberate killing of Brady is followed by the accidental or impulsive killings of Moon and Hill.

But if the two films are put in the perspective I have suggested less questionable comparisons can be made. Annie should be linked with Tunstall and Garrett. She makes actual for Helen Tunstall's potential gift to Billy, the ability to read (or more particularly in Helen's case, the essential basis for reading, language). She is able to do this because she also makes actual for Helen, Garrett's potential gift to Billy, which is that of discipline.

In doing this Annie takes on the role of the father. Two other features of the film will help support this suggestion. First, Annie's real antagonist is Helen's mother whose love for Helen becomes a smothering thing preventing the child from developing and faring. Second, the person who would normally counteract the mother's love, Helen's actual father, is presented in the film either as a buffoon or as somebody who will not accept his role as a father (believing that Helen cannot be improved and therefore being willing to consider putting her in an institution).

Armed with this extended perspective I think it possible to go on to discuss *The Chase*; though I think this must be done with caution since Penn has expressed unease about the film and because of the association in its making of three other people with distinctive artistic personalities, Sam Spiegel, the producer, Lillian Hellman, the writer, and Marlon Brando, the star. Indeed on the face of it *The Chase* seems to have quite a different central situation from any of Penn's other films, being mainly preoccupied with a description of the behaviour of social groups in an American town. But I think that if one examines it carefully, the film reveals another situation which it is, in fact, organized

around. The character of Bubber Reeves is very like that of Billy the Kid or Bonnie and Clyde. Like them he is anti-social, given to sudden irresponsible acts one of which landed him in jail; like them he is engaging and likeable; like them he unleashes a general social violence which eventually destroys him.

It is this situation which provides the dramatic shape of the film (as the title *The Chase* implies) though this shape is partly hidden by the large sections of the film that are given over to social description. An interesting clue to the contradictions this produces in the film is provided by Bubber's reaction to the appearance of his wife with Jake in the wrecked car dump. By the norms established in the rest of the film, Bubber should be suspicious of the appearance of his wife with another man but in fact he simply accepts the both of them and the three become a little group, all of whom are menaced by the violence that is unleashed. They can only become such a group because Bubber's attitudes are those of a pre-adolescent and do not include sexual jealousy.

Within this framework, Sheriff Calder can be seen as playing a role close to Pat Garrett's. He offers Bubber the sympathetic guidance and respect for order of the ideal father. Although the film is not a Western like *The Left Handed Gun*, he is like Garrett a sheriff. The fact that he is a sheriff leads on to another important consideration about Penn's work. As well as playing the role of the father in a personal psychological sense Calder and Garrett have a more general social function in that they stand for abstract conceptions of law and order. This function is important because it forces them not to *represent* society but to *mediate* between society and the heroes. This mediation is necessary because society has been identified critically and seen as easily erupting into violence – as much a threat to law and order, if not more, than the heroes. So in *The Chase* Sheriff Calder is defeated because he is not in a position to mediate effectively and is therefore simply forced by the end of the film to retire from the scene.

In *Bonnie and Clyde* there is a logical progression from Calder's situation. Hamer, whose position as a Texas Ranger puts him in a similar relation to the law as Calder, does not play a mediating function but identifies himself, and in fact leads society's violent response to the Barrow Gang. Paralleling this shift he loses the essential characteristic of the father on the personal psychological level, which both

Garrett and Calder have, that is personal sympathetic concern, and simply becomes the vengeful father.

There is another contradiction that emerges out of this general consideration. I have said that Penn's heroes are unsocialized and that this leads to their ultimate downfall. But this obvious context into which they could be socialized, the established society of Penn's films, is seen critically and might in fact be regarded as no more than a collection of individuals very like the heroes but whose social situation sours them and gives their violence its extravagance and hysteria. So there is no real possibility for the heroes to become socialized. The only social groups Penn's heroes ever feel at home in are essentially marginal ones like Mexicans or gypsies in *The Left Handed Gun* or unemployed migrant communities in *Bonnie and Clyde*. The impossibility of the heroes becoming socialized because their natural social context is viewed critically is surely the source of the pessimistic nature of Penn's work.

I hope this account of Penn's films makes clear the nature of the critical method I am advocating (I should say that I have left *Mickey One* out of account because I am not sufficiently familiar with it and its dense symbolic quality demands great familiarity if one is to discuss it at all adequately). The method leads me to very different conclusions about Penn's work than Robin Wood's and readers might estimate the worth of the two methods by comparing our accounts of Penn and seeing which they find the more satisfactory.

In general I have been trying to argue that if criticism is to confront the problems raised by Robin Wood's critical method it needs to:

(a) *develop an analytic apparatus*. In my account of Penn's films I have tried to show how part of this apparatus might be developed on the basis of the auteur principle conceived as a search for the basic structure of an artist's work through examination of its recurrent features. We need, of course, a much more highly developed critical apparatus than this. At present, the area of film language seems a profitable one to explore.

(b) *be descriptive in intent*. In my account of Penn's films I have tried to describe how they work rather than to evaluate them. This description might lead at a later date to an evaluation of Penn's work – a case could be made that

Bonnie and Clyde is one of Penn's less successful films on the grounds that the shift in Hamer's position in the drama makes the film simpler than the previous films and less coherent – but it will have more force if we can first agree on a description of his work.

(c) *become a collaborative venture*. There are still many areas of critical discussion that need to be opened up and this obviously cannot be done by any one critic and must be a collective operation. Even the critical tool I have tried to demonstrate depends for its success on the support of other critics. The enthusiasm generated by the search for an underlying structure can easily lead the critic astray and encourage him to dragoon aspects of the film in support of his thesis. The only real check on this will be a challenge from other critics which forces him to reconsider and reconceive his position.

(d) *be provisional in nature*. It follows from (a), (b) and (c) that criticism at present should proceed cautiously. Critics should always be aware that for the moment all they can hope to do is clear the ground. Dogmatic interpretations and assertions of value can only hinder this work.

REFERENCES

1. *Arthur Penn*, p. 86.
2. Components of the National Culture, N.L.R.
3. This is not an uncharacteristic outburst. The same technique is used whenever Wood seeks to demonstrate one film is inferior to another. See the discussion of *Goldfinger* – *Hitchcock's Films*, p. 100 – or the comparison between *From Russia with Love* and *North by Northwest* – *Hitchcock's Films*, p. 22.

Camera Adventure

An Experiment in Hornsey

Roger Hudson

I CAMERA ADVENTURE

The Hornsey Group – all teenagers – invented the name ‘Camera Adventure’ for their method of investigating their environment. A subject is chosen – Love, Dreams, Laughter. Areas are selected – Mayfair, Soho, Billingsgate, Knightsbridge. And, on the morning of the ‘adventure’, members, in groups of two or three and armed with cameras and tape-recorders, are given a sealed envelope with a map of their area, the subject and a sheet of quotations to set the questions flowing. They stop people in the streets, in cafes, pubs, and shops, and record and film the people and the area.

Ann: Do you think you've ever been in love?

Man: What! With a face like mine? You must be joking.

Ann: Oh, what your face is like has nothing to do with what you feel.

Man: Well I feel with my hands – I don't know about you.

Erica: I hope you don't mind us asking but we've been going round this area finding out what people think about 'love'.

(Woman laughs.)

Woman: What do you want to know about love for? Go out and find it for yourself.

Erica: We haven't found much of it about . . .

Woman: Well, we've been married twenty-five . . .

Kelvin: What do you think love is?

Woman: I don't know – just a feeling between people, that's all.

. . . (To husband) Oh, they're joking – they've got to be!

Erica: We're not – we're serious.

Man: They're not. They're taping it, aren't they? What do you want to know? You've got to give it thought, haven't you? I was in the navy when I first, er . . .

Woman: And he gave it a lot of thought there (laughs).

Ann: Do you belong to the Salvation Army because you love Christ?

Roger Hudson
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journalist working
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Group

S.A. Officer (woman): *Yes, we belong to the Salvation Army because we love Christ.*

Ann: *What sort of love is this?*

S.A. Officer: *It's very difficult to explain – it's a love because we know that Christ loves us, we love him and we try to serve him by loving other people.*

Ann: *Are you married?*

Man: *No, I'm single. That's why I have experienced it, you see? My girl went to Canada. She was away six months and I saved every halfpenny to fly to Canada.*

Ann: *Because you needed her?*

Man: *... because I wanted to be with her. But when I got there I found that the memory of her was different from what she actually was – so I came home again.*

Ann: *Have you got a boy friend?*

Girl: *Yes.*

Ann: *Do you think you love him?*

Girl: *No.*

Ann: *Have you ever been in love?*

Girl: *No. (Embarrassed giggle.) I don't think so anyway.*

Ann: *How would you know if you did fall in love?*

Girl: *I dunno.*

Keith Kennedy co-ordinates the Hornsey Group. 'It surprises most young people that almost every adult they spoke to treated them with a kindly interest,' he told me. Keith teaches film, drama and social studies at Loughton College of Further Education Hornsey College of Art. He has been associated with the Hornsey Group from its inception and points out the many values in camera adventures.

'They give the groups a valid reason for visiting the chosen areas, a reason not aimless or only pleasure-seeking – WORK. And to be involved in work adds enormously to your self-respect. The boy who was invited to join fish-porters in a café in Billingsgate in a game of cards, replied, 'No. I'm interviewing ...'

'And for everyone there is the satisfaction of having experimented with a process used by the television film units. The fact that there has been a wide divergence in technical standards is insignificant. What is discoverable for all is that learning about other human beings for yourself is an experience to place above having them interviewed on your behalf by another person.'

After a 'camera adventure', the films and tapes are edited to make a film record of the trip, photographs are printed and mounted for display, tapes are transcribed and published in the Group's duplicated magazine *Zoom*.

Somewhat similar ventures are 'Confrontations' when the Group makes a special visit to interview, film and observe people in closed environments, such as a monastery, mental hospitals, prisons. Students sometimes arrange straight-forward interviews with educationists, television producers. And there are simple social observation sessions.

During a recent session, members paired and spent an hour in the streets of Wood Green looking closely at the behaviour of other people. Reports were written on return. The subject was 'Laughter'.

'We proceeded along Wood Green High Street, and saw hundreds, thousands of miserable faces.

'Suddenly a woman walked towards us. Smiling. Yes, it was a definite smile. Feeble, but it was there. She was smiling in shop windows.

'Then - yes - miserableness.

'Suddenly a coloured boy smiled at me. Yes, a laugh. Gesticulated with his mouth. I smiled back, and he ran into his house. We proceeded along a road and saw some Italians joking amongst themselves. But further on there were more miserable faces. We even tried laughing aloud but people gave us funny looks. Suddenly I had an idea. I asked a man for a light.

"Yes," he said. But the wind blew our matches out.

"I'm going to use all your matches," I said.

"Doesn't matter," he said. "It's one of those days," and smiled.'

'We walked through Wood Green shopping centre, entering shops and observing the passers-by. From time to time we stopped to question people. Their immediate reaction was, usually, to smile, often in an embarrassed fashion. On closer questioning we found that the general mood was neither happy nor unhappy, but was rather an "emotional void". This may be due to the general atmosphere of the wet, dismal shopping centre, and the fact that most people were intent on their afternoon shopping; however, closer questioning revealed that many people's lack of emotion, rather than due solely to their present environment, was a natural thing. Only a few people felt any regret at the general atmosphere of misery; many felt surprise that we should challenge this.'



Jane, 17 years old. 8 O levels, final year at school, preparing for 3 A levels. Interests, Art, Drama, Dancing.

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING AN ONLY CHILD?



It's bloody lousy.
You grow inwards because you don't know anyone else.
You start to live in a fantasy world.
I even made up a brother.



There was this boy, you see. I was in the school play with him.
Well, I 'kidded' him for about an hour that I had six brothers.
But he really didn't believe me.
So I said: 'I have really only got one brother,' and he believed me.
He still believes me, even now.



Then of course, if you believe something enough, it almost becomes a reality.
You see, I met another boy and I told him that I had a brother, though he knew I didn't have one because he was pretty intelligent.
'What happens if your brother gets married?' he asked.
Oh, my brother will never get married because he would never go away and leave me for another girl.
'Oh, it might happen, most boys get married,' he replied.



Well, I got so upset when I thought my brother might go away and leave me that I cried.



It makes it even truer to me because I told you about it.

These examples from 'Camera Adventures' argue our case; they teach young people to observe and question their environment; they teach self-confidence, they encourage young people not to be afraid of social contact with adults or people outside their own circle. The people they interview also seem to get enjoyment out of being questioned.

2 JUST TRYING OUT AN IDEA

The Hornsey Group owes its existence to Douglas Lowndes, Senior Lecturer in Film Studies at Hornsey College of Art. He wanted to test out new aspects of the use of film in education: 'Not to offer yet another craft skill in schools but to use cameras and tape-recorders as a means of extending the powers of observation and comment. Used in this way they can provide a valid and exacting media to help young people to come to an understanding of society and the world around them.'

It sounded a bit like educationists' jargon maybe, but he was serious. He contacted Keith Kennedy who had been doing some improvisational drama at the Albany Boys School in Enfield where he was then teaching. They started a Saturday morning course at Page Green School, the teacher training department of Hornsey College of Art. Children at secondary schools in the area were told they could join up for this course in film and drama. Camera adventure, improvisations, confrontations developed from there.

Present members of the Group have come in different ways at different times. Keith O'Hagen, who is now 18 and does office work in Enfield, was one of the 'non-swimmers' at Albany School who improvised plays with Keith Kennedy. He joined on Keith's suggestion. Michael Bevis, now 19, and David Puddifoot, also 19, both joined at the beginning. Michael was a pupil at Clark's College when he heard about the Hornsey College course. David was at the William Grimshaw Secondary Modern School (now part of Creighton Comprehensive). Both are in their second year at Waltham Forest School of Art.

Linden Slater is 18, has just left school – Minchinden Grammar School – and hopes to go to Lancaster University to read English. She joined about two years ago. 'I went to school with a girl who was a member and she introduced me. I wanted to see what was going on, and I'd heard they were going to the Edinburgh Festival and I wanted to go

too.' Teresa Stutz, 16, joined nearly two years ago. Her mother was a teaching colleague of Keith Kennedy. Ricc Rossi, 15, an architect's assistant, has known about the Group for two years but only played an active part in recent months. David Block, 15, started coming more recently after his sister told him about the Group – she is a journalist with a local paper that had been invited to cover the recent Open Workshop.

Members live in widely separated parts of North London and family backgrounds are as varied. Fathers' jobs include: factory worker making vacuum cleaners, 'food supplier' at a London hospital, technical illustrator for Handley Page, driving instructor for Schweppes, scientific research, proof-reader for local newspaper.

Everything went well with the Saturday course at Page Green. Equipment, filmstock and tapes were provided. All the ideas could be tried out. The Education Department of the British Film Institute took an interest, and the group started work on projects that could be shown in a Workshop session for teachers and educationists at the National Film Theatre. To ensure effective viewing, members were given 16-mm. facilities for preparing the camera adventure film for this. The Group's contribution included improvisations as well as films – and there were examples of film work from other schools.

So successful was the Workshop as evidence for the value of film in education that official approval was given shortly after for the creation of a Film Section within the teacher training department of Hornsey College – with Douglas Lowndes in charge.

Says Keith Kennedy: 'Obviously, Douglas was too busy then to be able to spend much time but the boys and girls were going to be terribly disappointed if it all stopped. So we decided to keep it going, using my flat at first, until I moved, and then premises provided by the Haringey Youth Service. We borrowed equipment from Hornsey for a time but this became increasingly difficult.'

'The Haringey premises allows use of a large hall on Saturdays and a smaller room on Thursday evenings in White Hart Lane Old School in Wood Green. They also have a small room there as an office/store, and a darkroom.'

The Hornsey Group is virtually without equipment. It has one 8-mm. camera on loan from the Youth Service ('in fact,

the Youth Officer took it back last week to lend to another group'), one quartz-iodine light ('useful for lighting interiors'), one very old duplicating machine, Keith Kennedy's own complete 8-mm. outfit which the Group uses, and such still cameras as individual members now own. They have to borrow equipment – or do without. A collection is now made from all members taking part in a project to buy filmstock. This explains why a project like 'laughter' was an observation rather than a filmed-and-taped-interview exercise.

3 IMPROVISATION

The Hornsey Group's other main activity is improvisation which is sometimes exploited further by adding a cine camera as a participant. The resulting film is then edited and shown and members can study what they have done.

We take a situation,
Mother's dying, Dad is dead,
Sister wants her education,
But her brother shakes his head.

'We must work for our dear mother,
She may stay here quite some time –
Was the same with your dear brother
He left school before his time.'

Let her go, John,
Let her go, John,
You never can forget,
You were that dear brother,
Remember what you said?

She shouts at him, says nothing,
Then leaves by the front door,
Has she gone for ever?
He hopes for nothing more.

Her mother asks a question,
'Where has Janet gone?'
'She's gone to university.'
'Then I hope it won't be long,
Oh, I hope it won't be long.'

(David Puddifoot)

An improvisation can be based on a situation, a word, a poem, an object – a carrot or an onion. Sessions are taken by individual members who guide an improvisation or decide when to stop it. 'Anything may happen. Or nothing. And if an improvisation ends disappointingly we can begin again.'

'Why did I come in the first place? Out of curiosity, and because I was invited – I walked into a smoky room full of people and thought: "My God, what are they doing?" Then I came again because I wanted to see what they all got out of it – and why I couldn't do it. I decided that if I once found out why I couldn't join in, it would help me do so.

'I was afraid of the people, afraid of being *me* in front of them, and not being accepted. This feeling took a lot of getting over.

'I think that the aims of the group are threefold:

1. Enjoyment.
2. Fulfilment of a kind not found at school.
3. Learning to meet people and STILL BE YOURSELF.

'I do think that drama can be an end in itself – to me, the very fact that I got up and joined in proves that there is something in it of lasting value. If people's dignity can be encroached upon to that extent, so that they become more accessible to others, then I think that improvisation has found a good level. It can be an aim in itself because:

1. It breaks down the barrier of dignity.
2. It provides the improvisers with the chance to laugh at themselves.
3. It tries to work out everyday problems.'

(Anon.)

'It all started as group therapy for me. It gave me self-confidence meeting other people, getting on with the opposite sex. I don't tend to be so embarrassed now in front of other people. Then I became interested in art – not for art's sake but as a thing for people. I love arguing. I argue practically every day with my father but I know it's no use – he never budges. Often the very same arguments I have at home with my parents come out in drama sessions, nearly the same words not from you but from other people, what your parents have said.' (Michael Bevis)

'I found a lack of sympathy in the group. I found, too, that when I was eventually able to stand up and do something, part of me was delighted, but part of me was disturbed because I felt I was laying myself bare to unsympathetic

people. The group has no idea of where it wants to go – O.K. then, continue with improvisation; but it can be taken to a higher level. My own idea is to use improvisation for exploration of self in relation to other people. I feel that if improvisation happens in the “every day” lives of people, this is both necessary and important.’

(Caroline Neuberger)

A lot of members now seem to feel that improvisation as a game or as a therapy is not enough. They have been promised a large room just under the roof and enough rostra and lighting equipment to turn it into a small theatre where they can present shows to an audience. This has roused new enthusiasm and the latest project is an improvised play being developed under David Puddifoot’s leadership – family situation, key factors ‘cross-purposes’ and ‘Biafra’.

The Group has also taken their improvising into mental hospitals, a form of ‘social work’ that they intend to continue.

‘Keith Kennedy: I wrote to Springfield Hospital and said what we would do. We made two conditions – we wanted to avoid making it an ‘educational visit’ and we wouldn’t go simply as a drama group to present a play to an audience. We later went to Hackney General and Marlborough Day Clinic because patients from Springfield who also attended there had mentioned our work to the therapists.’

‘Springfield: spacious grounds silent people, sitting on the grass looking up walking with attendants, slowly . . . flowers . . . paths that criss and cross grass benches silence knitting gazing downwards sun shining who cares?’

Inside: Patients and us sitting in a circle brooding crying swaying from side to side interested getting up and walking away a good performance clapping half interested swaying from side to side tears laughter tears clapping.

(Michael Bevis)

‘Inside the ward a ring of people are waiting for us to interest them. Are we going to do a play? They all seem to lose interest when we say ‘no’. At first there is no participation. They seem embarrassed; some fidget; some wander off to meet visitors; some read magazines. Then gradually they begin to show us who they are and what they are thinking. ‘One woman screams – long and loud – when she hears a recording of an air raid siren. We never found out why.

'But the most successful means of drawing them to words and action seems to be a "family" situation: we learn that one girl's father is cruel to her; how a woman feels when her husband leaves after twenty years of marriage and how one man's inadequacy in small matters at home gradually surrounded and destroyed him.'

Before the improvisation.

A middle-aged man:

'That other man was silly not to join in – yes, I would like to be in your play. Yes, I will be the father, and you are my children – you have just come home from a long ride. We welcome you, we sit down at the table, say grace and eat our meal. Yes . . . I see . . . a situation develops between you two. ' . . . Oh, I am here because I have problems. I just can't face them – family, domestic problems . . . I know I am mixed up. It's nice here. They look after you, but I would rather be home, with my children. It's not the same.'

The improvisation is due to begin:

'It's time for us now is it? . . . wait . . . hang on . . . I can't . . . I'll just go over here and sit down . . . I'll watch you. No, no I'll sit here, I'll watch you.' (Michael Bevis)

These were neurosis wards of mental hospitals. The only time the Group could visit was visiting time 'which was very distracting for us and for ordinary visitors.'

'Our chief difficulty, since we had not been introduced beforehand, was in distinguishing between hospital staff and patients.'

Remembered – Mr. X seemed to become less withdrawn, and eventually to smile at the points where others laughed. 'Mr. X is not really associating with what we are doing, he's laughing at his own fantasies,' the therapist said.

'Too soon it was time to leave. They thank us for coming and ask us please to come again – for they only want to be treated as people and inside this antiseptic, old, haphazard hospital they are scared of losing all means of self-identity. I came away feeling that by doing something I enjoyed, I had helped other people to enjoy themselves and perhaps helped them to understand their problems a bit better. That must sound very pompous but I didn't get any "do-gooder" complex about it, at least I *hope* I didn't.' (Ann Scott)

'It really astounds me how people think of mental hospitals – lots of mad people and padded cells and locked doors. Most

of them aren't like that at all. They're just people with problems. So many of the patients are just women who couldn't cope with family life.' (David Puddifoot)

Keith Kennedy: 'Some ten of our members became very much involved in these visits but then it was the school holidays and three of our members moved out of the area. We didn't keep them up. Springfield couldn't afford to continue paying our travelling expenses but Hackney General keeps asking when we're going back – and we will do shortly. At the start of last year the Youth Service said it was forming a junior league of friends of Friern Barnet Mental Hospital which we thought would provide us with an organized way of doing a lot more. But they appointed a committee which didn't do much more than talk – one of our representatives got fed up and left.'

4 PEOPLE AND PROJECTS

KEITH O'HAGEN – 'I used to write stories when I was at junior school. If I didn't fancy a lesson, I just wrote a story instead. Now I write in my own time (sometimes at work). I type – with two fingers.

'I've written two novels. One of them *Gurdy Owen* was inspired by reading John Lennon – it has twelve chapters none of which has any connection with the others and two are left out. I saw *Waiting for Godot* and that inspired me to write my own version called "The Train".

'I did one play called "Depression" which was like a poem with each verse starting "Alone in a house, with nothing to do . . ." and we set it to some jazz. I was indoors when I thought of it, alone and getting more and more depressed. In the end the hero gets so depressed he commits suicide – I didn't.

'Most of my plays I write straight down; they're not improvised and I don't rewrite.

'My job's alright but I get a bit fed up with it at times.'

DAVID PUDDIFOOT – 'I started writing poems when I was at school but it was nothing to do with lessons. Now I've given it up. I was doing so many things that I just had to cut down on them somewhere so I cut out writing poetry. It took me three tries to pass English O Level. I still spell terribly badly.' The Group presented David's 'Untitled Play' in the Haringey Arts Festival.

MICK BEVIS – ‘At the Haringey Arts Festival I did “The Wish” with Alison Forbes. The theme was a family argument – a couple who have a dog and no children. I was under the table and she was sitting on a chair on top so that she was always dominant – it sounds a bit gimmicky but everything was there for a reason. It ended with the line: “God, I wish we could start again.” That was the only time the word “wish” occurred.’

ANN SCOTT – ‘left home at 15 because her father sloshed her; worked as a mother’s help; very attractive girl. Now she’s getting married and we only see her occasionally.’

In 1966, the Hornsey Group presented a Workshop during an Education Film Week at the Edinburgh Festival. Visitors were involved in improvisation and film-making sessions and the members continued with projects they had started in London before going. These projects give the best indication of the range and imagination of work not so far mentioned.

Individual Projects

David Puddifoot and Caroline Neuberg evolved a poem from a photographic sequence taken by themselves in London – the poetry being written after the photographs were taken. They called this a ‘photopoem’.

Keith O’Hagen and Jeannine Graham worked together on a script, a farce with people of their own age (16) in mind. The central character was known as ‘Nigel Nostril’. A collection was made of letters addressed to Marjorie Proops of the *Woman’s Mirror* from girls who were distressed by the indelicate behaviour and physical inadequacies of their various boy-friends. The scriptwriters decided to assume that each letter referred to the same young man – Nigel. It was largely developed through improvisation.

Douglas Cann edited the 16-mm. film he shot during ‘confrontation’ visits to Aylesford Monastery, Summerhill School and the London Film Group.

Ann Scott was engaged in a study of the Vietnam situation including: a four-minute film from cut-out pictures from magazines and a taped outline for a soundtrack; a college display of material on Vietnam for the workshop; a series of pictorial stimuli to be used during an improvisation session. Lydia Heller and Lynden Slater produced a series of exercises, scripts and a photographic sequence for a study entitled ‘Literature and Improvisation’.

Martin, Steven Holmes, Judy Silver and Elaine Taylor recorded a series of conversations with visitors to the workshop and people at large in the streets of Edinburgh. They called this 'Edinburgh Talking'.

Steve Herman filmed pictures of crowds taken from magazines – his subject being an imaginary final assembly of the human race. An address is delivered to these by a mysterious figure 'No. 1'. Comments from the crowd were shown by the addition of speech balloons. The address by No. 1 was written and taped by Steve.

Mike Bevis prepared a series of short film scripts. His aim was economy in image, filmstock and time.

Film Script

1. A close-up of an alarm clock is seen – after one minute it explodes.
2. Then another alarm clock is seen – after two minutes it explodes.
3. A third alarm clock is seen – after four minutes a hand smashes it with a hammer.

The Miracle Worker

Donald Fairservice

The Miracle Worker is melodrama. The story lends itself so readily to melodramatic interpretation that it would have been a gross error to attempt a less formalized treatment of so highly emotional a subject. Arthur Penn uses melodrama in exactly the same way as Joseph Losey; both exploit a common stylistic device to achieve less obvious ends: melodrama is used as a vehicle for allegory.

There are two levels on which the film can be examined. Firstly, there are the formal qualities of melodrama – a strong and direct appeal to the emotions – which are appropriate to a narrative taken from life in which a struggle to overcome obstacles plays itself out in an extremely dramatic, almost archetypal way. Secondly, its formal and stylistic qualities blend so perfectly within the melodramatic treatment, that the film works as allegory, although, in this case, it is an allegory that is not far removed from the subject of the film. Annie Sullivan is a teacher of the blind and dumb. Helen Keller is her pupil. Annie's problems are those of any teaching situation; Helen's are those of the untaught – the blind in non-awareness – the dumb in non-communication. Arthur Penn uses the story of Helen's search for knowledge in a dark bewildering world as a direct allegory for the problems that beset a larger world confused by ignorance and desperate for the key to greater awareness.

In a now Brechtian sense the film works splendidly; there is on this level an almost total emotional involvement which reaches a complete climax at the end of the film; when the 'key' to understanding is found and Helen spells out in dumb language the word 'teacher'. The film is a sort of allegory of itself. The pleasure that one gets from involving oneself in its drama compels a different level of examination and this in turn adds to the pleasure. Consciously bringing into the mind an awareness of this blend of technique and intent heightens the response.

The title backgrounds almost tell the complete story of the

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film. The shadows of Helen and the stair bannisters fall across a *blank*, grey wall. White *blank* sheets flap in the breeze: Helen *blindly* feels her way through them. As Helen advances, her distorted image is totally contained within the fragile, reflecting surface of the bauble on a Christmas tree. Her hand grasps it blindly. In slow motion and silence it falls and smashes on the floor. Helen stumbles blindly across a horizon and out of frame. Warily, and at a distance, her mother follows. Between them is a gap which is wider by far than mere distance – a gap which the audience is partially able to apprehend when it sees but does not hear the bauble smash from the tree; Helen neither sees nor hears it.

The very next image, the first after the titles, is of a ringing bell. In appearance it is a school bell. At first one thinks it *is* a school bell. Thus at the very beginning the ‘teach’, ‘school’, ‘learn’ references are clear and at the end of the film, Helen, having found a means to knowledge rushes to the bell and rings it, pulling the rope, summoning the family to witness the moment of her understanding. It is one of the key moments of the film and refers back to this early image.

The music which backs the credits is dreamy and quiet, matching the mood of the visuals. Penn is here attempting to ‘recreate’ Helen’s private world and is not merely reconstructing it. The harsh objective bell breaks this mood, as surely as Annie breaks up the aura of sadness, pity and despair with which the family, particularly the mother, have surrounded Helen. Like all Penn’s characters who represent ‘Society at Large’, the family never works actively at coming to terms with Helen’s nature, but passively accepts what she seems to be – a pet animal.

The following scene, in which the family agree to get a teacher for the almost animal-like Helen ends with a series of mid shots involving the arguing parents. Helen is central to all this and the final shot, a close-up of Helen with her mouth agape, dissolve to a high angle of Annie Sullivan running away from the camera towards her train. For a brief moment it appears that Annie, the teacher, is running into the wordless mouth of the blind, deaf and dumb Helen. Such grotesque, almost Expressionist, images occur quite frequently in the film – for example, in the whole of the opening credit sequence and first scene.

Our introduction to Annie is almost entirely visual. A blend of carefully controlled images tells us a great deal about the



teacher. As the train thunders through the dark night, Annie makes another journey – through memory into her past. She sleeps and dreams of the children that she has left behind at the blind school; children who, a few hours ago, had stood on the platform waving goodbye to a person they could not see. The scream of a passing train wakes her and she clutches at her handbag as though it were a child. The scene dissolves into the misty soft focus of her own childhood. She remembers a previous parting – her young, crippled brother crying: ‘Annie, don’t let them take me.’ She sees her leaving of the blind school as a sort of betrayal and she equates this with her own ‘betrayal’ of her young brother. Another scream of brakes and Annie has arrived. The general high noise level of the early part of the film is an attempt to point the silent world of Helen. The scream of brakes is also a metaphor to describe Annie’s internal tensions.

During this train journey we can see an example of Penn’s use of accurate and appropriate symbols which fuse the

A bond is struck

dramatic and allegorical levels of the film. Annie bathes her weak, almost burnt, eyes on the train – a recognition of the need for clear vision at a time of extreme doubt. This 'bathing eyes' image is repeated later in the film, also at a moment of extreme doubt, when her plan to get through to Helen in the summer house has apparently failed. The action seems to suggest a desire to wash away doubt, clear the vision and yet at the same time is perfectly acceptable in a literate way. The use of light and dark as symbols for knowledge and ignorance is markedly stressed during the train journey. Annie is partially blind herself and wears dark glasses because, as she tells Captain Keller: 'The light hurts my eyes.' A large close shot of her face behind dark glasses is intercut with the bright sun flashing through trees and on to her face. For Annie, too, the journey she is making will take her through darkness and difficulty towards knowledge and truth.

The introduction to Annie's past and consequently the guide to her motivation as well as her fears is subtly made. On the station where she is met by the waiting James Keller she says: 'I *had* a brother, Jamie.' On the journey to the Keller home the horse and carriage passes a graveyard. The location is never mentioned in dialogue; it never reappears in the film. I believe that it is there to suggest subconsciously that Jamie is in fact dead. This is made clearer later in the film but possibly Penn felt the need to implant this suggestion early on.

The first meeting of Annie and Helen is shot in a stylized and formal way. The carriage is bathed in sunlight. James and mother are dressed in light fabrics; father in pale grey; Annie Sullivan is attired in black. The direct reverse angle to this set-up is the Keller house which is imposing and fills the frame. By the porch of the house, in long shot, is Helen with her family excluded from the shot. It is a direct reverse from their view and into this frame comes Annie Sullivan. The two are framed for a moment in front of the house that will stand in judgment of the miracle.

The house, too, plays an Expressionist role in the film. Annie approaches Helen in the porch and bangs down her suitcase. This cues a cut to a medium shot which includes just the two of them. As Helen moves in towards Annie feeling the suitcase, the camera tracks in binding them together tightly in the frame. Suddenly as their hands touch on top of the suitcase we cut to a close-up of the hands. It



is a powerful moment coming as it does at the end of a sequence which has very deliberately isolated Helen and Annie and bound them together. There is a simplicity about this sequence which seems to me to be a particularly fine example of technique being used perfectly to inform context. The polarities are set up directly, unambiguously and melodramatically, both in regard to what happens on the scene and the way Penn shoots it. .

The family and Helen
the pet animal

Helen explores Annie's face and a bond is struck. Helen attempts to carry the heavy suitcase into the house: Annie tries to take it from her but Helen refuses showing an extremely independent spirit. This immediately recalls for us an earlier sequence when Annie demonstrated identical independence as James Keller attempted to carry the self same suitcase at the station. These twin references, the one complementing or countering the other, occur many times in the film. The 'meeting' scene between Helen and Annie, a dark, exploratory, tentative scene contrasts superbly with the sequence that follows. The family argue about the

merit of employing 'blind' Annie Sullivan to teach Helen. The scene is brightly lit but offsetting this is the squabbling and ignorance displayed by the family. The 'lessons' begin: 'Imitate now – understand later.' Annie starts to teach Helen the basis of a touch alphabet but is rewarded only with blows across the face and being locked in her room by Helen.

The use of a key as a symbol is not original but its use here is perfectly valid. Although used completely consciously as a dramatic device or clue, it is possible that it is intended to have some additional validity as a piece of subconscious character motivation. Helen steals the key of Annie's room and drops it down the well. The allegorical aspects of this act are several. Helen's natural desire to lock up somebody who imposes 'will' on her is a natural conscious reaction. It also can be equated with the subconscious desire of the uneducated to lock away the means to knowledge. What one does not understand, one distrusts. The key is specifically the key to Helen's understanding inasmuch as Helen, by dropping the key into the well, makes the primarily dramatic connection with 'Water', which we are to learn is the first word she learnt in babyhood and the means by which the moment of understanding is reached. This is also in another sense, for us, the audience, a 'key': the key moment, the climax. Again one notes use of appropriate visual metaphor. Another actual door key (introduced in the pre-climax scene) is very much in evidence at this moment. Mother has taken this key from Helen who has been playing with locked doors following her return from the summer house. 'I'll keep the key', says mother. 'I think we've had enough of locked doors too.' She refers of course to the summer house period when she and the family were locked out, away from Helen. But the line anticipates the end of the film. No more locked doors, the moment of Helen's understanding is at hand. In the final scene it is this key which Helen takes from mother and shows to Annie. Annie, of course, remains by the pump – the other key to the film, water.

The water reference is introduced several times before the climax, in particular during the summer house sequences. We see Annie washing Helen and spelling WATER in dumb language. Later we see them paddling against the current of a swiftly flowing stream. On another occasion rain runs in streams down the windows of the summer house. Finally, there is the dinner scene after the return to the house when



Helen throws the pitcher of water at Annie which directly leads into the pump sequence.

Strong contrast:
'Imitate now,
understand later'

The film shot in black and white, is for the most part low-key in its lighting and it is difficult to imagine this film succeeding as well in colour. The strong contrasts are constantly in sympathy with the film's theme – light: dark, knowledge: ignorance; and the photography blends perfectly with this heightened melodramatic treatment.

The structure of the film stresses that the path to understanding is not an easy one and in fact some of the highlights of the film are the 'battle' scenes. An early scene when Annie attempts to teach Helen to fold her napkin is played as a hard physical battle, which it is. In fact the scene is never resolved in vision and apparently continues late into the day. The business of learning is a struggle especially when the resistance to learning is deeply entrenched. The unwilling pupil always finds it easier to return to the easy truths which in the film are expressed simply as punishment and reward. The family's complacency is brought into question. Love

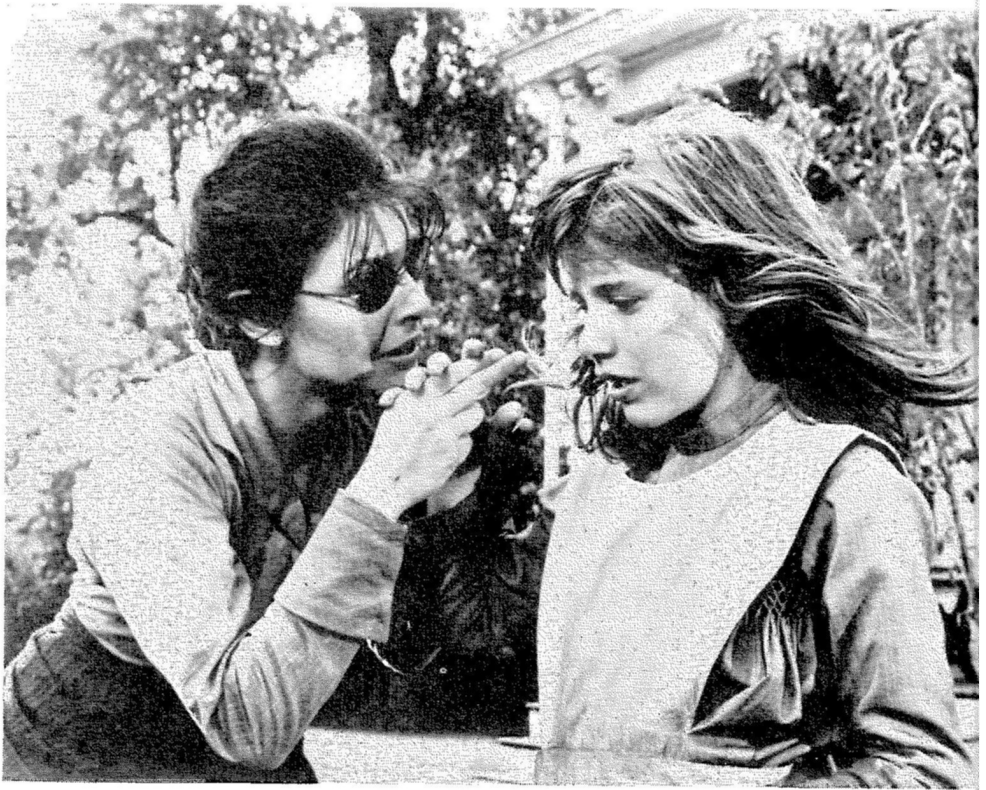
and indulgence are seen in misuse as the enemies of knowledge and awareness. Annie says: 'Mrs. Keller, I don't think Helen's worst handicap is deafness or blindness. I think it's your love – and pity.' Later she says: 'Even a dog you housebreak.'

At the beginning of the film Helen attempts to throw off all attempts to teach her: locking Annie into the bedroom, fighting physically to retain her coarse animal eating habits. At this stage she has to be taught *like* an animal. 'Imitate now, understand later.' In the summer house, however, different methods can be applied suggesting the first step of progress towards understanding – Annie exploits Helen's *desire to be taught*. Finding Helen recalcitrant and moody following the journey to the summer house (Helen thinks that she is going *away* from Annie) she starts to teach dumb language to a young Negro boy. This arouses Helen's jealousy and Annie regains her pupil. For the first time Helen shows a pleasure in using an imitative skill. In fact the end of the summer house period finds Helen teaching the finger language to the dog.

That the learning process is difficult is left in no doubt. The qualities necessary are underlined. Annie spells out DISCIPLINE as she searches a dictionary. And then significantly she says to Mrs. Keller: 'She learnt two nouns this morning – "Key" and "Water".' Earlier she indirectly refers to the slowness of the learning process. Indicating the letter A in sign language to Mrs. Keller Annie says: 'A, it's the first of many – twenty-six.'

The end of the summer house sequence contains some delicate symbolism. The agreed period is nearly up and Annie has not managed to make the essential breakthrough to Helen. Helen stands looking into the light streaming through the window. In front of her face she holds a thin, flimsy black chiffon scarf. This is all that stands between Helen and complete understanding. The barrier between ignorance and knowledge is paper thin. Annie tears the scarf aside: 'How can I reach you?' she cries. Father witnesses the scene: 'God may not have intended her to have eyes,' he says, a not unfamiliar justification for the continuation of ignorance. 'I mean her to,' replies Annie.

The summer house period ends with Helen's return to the house. Annie remains behind and the doubts return. It is at this moment that she once again bathes her eyes re-



echoing the earlier action on the train, itself a moment of tension and apprehension.

Subdued lighting:
the bridge between
instinct and awareness

Several times the film returns to the idea that the acquisition of knowledge involves sacrifice and hardship. For Annie this has a special poignancy. In one of the recurring 'memory' passages in the film we hear Annie giving the reply to her young crippled brother's request: 'Don't leave me, Annie, don't leave me.' She replies: 'I'm going away to learn to read and write', for which light becomes a metaphor. It is significant here that when Helen utters her first word 'water', the parents do not say 'She can speak' or 'She can see' but 'She knows'. This knowledge, symbolized by light is also transferred to the family itself. For Annie, the teacher, some justification for that childhood betrayal is essential. By teaching Helen, by making the bridge between instinct and awareness for her pupil, Annie purges herself of her guilt. This element, so perfectly woven into the main story of the film, does not appear in the play. Its presence in the film gives us a deep insight into Annie's motivation and

this in turn makes the end of the film particularly eloquent. Throughout the film the balance of sympathy alternates between Helen and Annie, mainly because we are aware of Annie's deep guilt feelings. The groundwork has been well done, however, and at the climax of the film all the sympathy turns to Annie. As she sits alone at the pump, the family having taken Helen into the house, we are aware she is experiencing both joy and pain. She is happy that her seemingly impossible task is now complete and that her childhood betrayal of her brother is vindicated but she also regrets that her role is now played out. For the teacher, like all teachers, loses, in a way, what the pupil gains. For Annie it is a little death and in a small way a cause for sorrow.

The Miracle Worker is available on 16 mm. from Film Distributors Associated (16 mm.) Ltd.

FILM CREDITS

producer Fred Coe, *director* Arthur Penn, *screenplay* William Gibson, *from the play by* William Gibson, *director of photography* Ernest Caparros, *art director* George Jenkins, *film editor* Aram Avakian, *camera operator* Jack Horton, *music* Laurence Rosenthal. *Cast:* ANNE BANCROFT: Annie Sullivan, PATTY DUKE: Helen Keller, VICTOR JORY: Capt. Keller, INGA SWENSON: Kate Keller, ANDREW PRINE: James Keller, KATHLEEN COMEGYS: Aunt Ev, BEAH RICHARDS: Viney, JACK HOLLANDER: Mr. Anagnos, MICHAEL DARDEN: Percy (10 yrs.), DALE ELLEN BETHEA: Martha (10 yrs.), PEGGY BURKE: Helen (7 yrs.), WALTER WRIGHT, JR.: Percy (8 yrs.), DONNA BRYAN: Martha (7 yrs.), MINDY SHERWOOD: Helen (5 yrs.), DIANE BRYAN: Martha (5 yrs.), KEITH MOORE: Percy (6 yrs.), MICHELE FARR: Young Annie (10 yrs.), ALLAN HOWARD: Young Jimmie (8 yrs.), JUDITH LOWRY: 1st Crone, WM. F. HADDOCK: 2nd Crone, HELEN LUDLUM: 3rd Crone, DOG: Belle. 107 mins. Distributed by United Artists Corp. Ltd., 142 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

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Reviews

Films

LES BICHES

Claude Chabrol, 1968

Les Biches, Claude Chabrol's latest and best film, allows one to take stock of the state of the French cinema ten years after the eruption of new talent generally known as the New Wave. The fortunes of the men whose names were commonly linked together (often erroneously) a decade ago have been very varied: some, like Alain Resnais, continue to enthral and stimulate us, others, like the François Truffaut of *Baisers volés*, have preserved their initial charm and delicacy, but have failed to give the one masterpiece that once seemed inevitable, still others have declined sadly (Alexandre Astruc) or have been silenced altogether (Georges Franju). Chabrol, with fifteen films in ten years, is definitely a survivor but an examination of a film like *Les Biches*, simply because it is so good of its kind, gives some indication of why the revolution in French film production promised in 1959 has failed to materialize.

Chabrol was one of the pioneers of the new French cinema – he had finished his first feature, *Le Beau Serge*, in 1958 while Truffaut, Godard and Resnais were still making shorts – and his early successes helped pave the way for other people. Similarly the difficulties he encountered in the early sixties, with films like *L'Oeil du malin* and *Ophélie*, are typical of the problems encountered by many other, younger directors. But he is, of course, far from being a perfect example of the stereotype image of New Wave directors. For one thing he did not like being a critic (and looking back he concludes he must have been a bad one). For another when forced, by the failure of his films at the box-office, to choose between silence and pure commerce, he plunged headlong into the world of spoof spy films, making, with Roger Hanin, the 'Tiger' films whose titles give an all too eloquent indication

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of their content: *Le Tigre aime la chair fraîche* and *Le Tigre se parfume à la dynamite*.

For years he worked on one film simply in order to be able to make the next and so on. Now, restored to favour in the eyes of producers and able once more to choose what kind of a film to make, he produces an archetypal French film. The remarkable thing is that Eric Rohmer, whose course since 1959 has been diametrically opposed to that of Chabrol and who has kept a personal independence by working largely in 16 mm., produces much the same kind of thing when he makes a feature film. Rohmer's *La Collectionneuse* and Chabrol's *Les Biches* are both typical examples of a kind of French cinema (and a corresponding kind of literature) which presents with more elegance than depth the study of social behaviour and sexual interaction among a tiny handful of characters away from the pressures of life. Both Chabrol and Rohmer, in their very different ways, examine the problems of the *ménage à trois* and the enigma of woman, and if *Les Biches* seems infinitely the better it is simply because technical polish and sheer professionalism are more effective in the cinema than pretentious pseudo-intellectual moralizing.

One of the aspects of Chabrol's work which aligns him more with the previous generation of film-makers (Clément, Becker, etc) than with his contemporaries is his refusal of autobiography. All his films are characterized by a certain detachment from the characters (very noticeable, for instance, in a work like *Les Bonnes Femmes* and perhaps one clue to his liking for Hitchcock). He has been quite categorical in his refusal to use personal material in his films: 'Telling your own story seems disgusting to me. There can be something autobiographical on the level of some small detail, something really tiny, things you have seen, but never anything which has affected you strongly, transformed you or which corresponds to something which deeply concerns you personally. I shall never tell the way in which I got my divorce.' Differing in this way from Godard, who makes his films out of his deepest preoccupations of the moment, Chabrol is equally far removed from Truffaut in the handling of actors. Chabrol has had some shrewd observations to make about an actress like Jeanne Moreau (with whom Truffaut made *Jules et Jim* and *La Mariée était trop belle* and for whom he wrote *Mata-Hari*). He told an interviewer: 'I think moreover that these are people who have a quality, which is certainly very rare, of submitting themselves totally to the director, but in return for this submission they really

want you to make a film for them.' This kind of idea is quite alien to Chabrol: 'I would find that a little obscene, like telling the story of your life', and though he has used his wife in many of his films, he has never allowed her to dominate the film or determine the course of his direction.

Les Biches clearly represents, for Chabrol, a return to the sources of his inspiration after the long desert of commercial film-making for producers he despises. (He once explained in an interview that the difference between the American and the French cinemas was due to the differing quality of the producers: 'In France a producer is a man who knows nothing. Nothing. Even if they made films themselves they would end up knowing nothing. Even if they made forty films: nothing.') There are some differences between 1958 and 1968, principally the lack of the Christian overtones apparent in *Le Beau Serge*, for Chabrol lost his faith, or to be more precise reasoned it away, in the late fifties. But the nature of the return is symbolized by his working for the first time in seven years with the script-writer Paul Gegauff who had been his collaborator on four films including *Les Cousins* and *Les Bonnes Femmes*. The first of these, like *Le Beau Serge*, had a plot with strong homosexual overtones. The relationship between Jean-Claude Brialy and Gerard Blain was never explicitly labelled as such but the quality and extent of their mutual need for each other allowed the possibility of interpretation on this level. *Les Biches* is in a sense a reworking of this theme but with the sexes changed and the relationship more clearly defined: we are never in any doubt about the lesbian relationship of Frédérique (Chabrol's wife, Stéphane Audran) and Why (Jacqueline Sassard) but the delicacy and insight with which their interaction is handled surpasses anything Chabrol has done before.

Chabrol is only marginally interested in the study of social environment and for *Les Biches* he chooses a setting of opulent luxury: the villa in Saint Tropez, the Mercedes, the yacht. This concern with decorative effect is a constant feature of his work – one recalls the interiors of *Les Cousins* or Antonella Lualdi's house in *A Double Tour* – and though he would no doubt argue that there is a critical dimension in the film, he in fact condemns wealth rather as Cecil B. de Mille used to condemn sin: by giving the audience a long look at it first. In *Les Biches* Frédérique uses her money to buy people, but while forming part of a beautifully acid portrait of the idle middle-classes, her case is too exceptional to constitute a

genuine instance of social comment. Another thing lacking in *Les Biches* is any sort of developed plot. The happenings in the film can be related in a couple of sentences: Frédérique picks up Why, a pavement artist who draws dogs in Paris, seduces her and takes her off to Saint Tropez. When Why becomes involved with an architect Paul (Jean-Louis Trintignant), Frédérique seduces him too and he comes to live with her at the villa. For a while the three can live in the same house with an appearance of calm but when Why finds herself excluded from the others' relationship she kills Frédérique and attempts to take her place.

The director is at his best with this kind of minimal plot, for his own concerns are elsewhere: 'The subject is the characters and the form. The plot troubles me more than anything else . . . On the other hand the construction amuses and interests me. I am in favour of simple plots and complicated characters.' *Les Biches* is essentially a sequence of scenes and interludes recalling in this respect a film like *Les Cousins*. There are three seduction scenes, covering the possible permutations of two women and a man, of which the first – Frédérique and Why – is the most developed and striking, building up to a climax as a button on Why's jeans is clicked open and followed by an 'interlude' of tracking shots of the journey down to the Mediterranean. Also powerful is the love scene of Frédérique and Paul overheard by Why, who crouches naked and masturbating at the door. There are also several of those meal-time confrontations which are something of a speciality of Chabrol's and a beautifully acted scene in which the three of them get drunk and almost end up in bed together. Here the tensions of who is going to end up with whom are brilliantly conveyed through the ebb and flow of the characters' feelings. To conclude there is the obligatory ending of murder, which is unsatisfactory in much the same way as the endings of some Truffaut films are (*La Peau Douce* for instance). The links between these various scenes are only perfunctorily sketched in – Chabrol has little gift for narrative and wisely eschews it.

Alternating with the more serious scenes concerned with the central trio, the director includes passages of broad comedy featuring Frédérique's two parasitic hangers-on. We see the latter reciting revolutionary passages, reading non-sensical proverbs and improvising music as well as spying on Why and Paul with clownish incompetence. The transitions of tone are handled with a skill Chabrol has never

before equalled and give rise to some splendid juxtapositions (for example a cut from the disparaging comment 'Quelle salope!' to Why's terribly vulnerable face). Though Chabrol clearly relishes the broad, hammy acting and the air of knock-about farce that surrounds these two spongers, there is not the slightest attempt to glorify or justify them. It is not by chance that when they torment Why with their animal guessing game the one imitates a wolf and the other a hyena.

Like all Chabrol's best work *Les Biches* has a clear formal shape and the director has divided his narrative into four numbered sections. In the first, the Prologue, Frédérique 'buys' Why for 500 francs (which is exactly the sum she later wins in a lottery) and takes her back to her flat to make love to her. The second part, entitled 'Frédérique', takes in the whole of the story of the pair's idyllic days in St. Tropez, the intrusion of Paul who sleeps first with Why and then with Frédérique and the break that occurs when he and Frédérique decide to go off together. Here Frédérique, in jeans and boots and generally dark colours, is the dominant figure, a huntress who ruthlessly uses those around her. In the third part, 'Why', the focus changes to the erstwhile victim who, left alone and excluded from the life of the two people she loves most, tries to gain the upper hand. She can provoke a quarrel between Frédérique and her 'parasites' but not win back her affections. Alone she begins to act out the role of Frédérique, borrowing her clothes and jewels, imitating her make-up and voice. The end of this section parallels the opening of part two, retracing the route from the coast to Paris, and now the poisoned knife which Why toyed with on her first arrival is missing from its place among the hunting souvenirs in the hallway of the villa. Part four, the Epilogue, moves like the opening section from the Pont des Arts to Frédérique's apartment but this time the action culminates not in an act of love, but in a murder. Our last view of Why is of her lying on the bed wearing the long coat Frédérique had worn at the beginning of the film and summoning Paul in a feigned voice. The victim has become her tormentor.

The pattern of *Les Biches* is clear and satisfying but despite Chabrol's concern with the shaping of his film there are distinct limitations to his formalistic approach. For one thing he is no innovator and he once admitted finding it 'practical' to 'rely on such things as established styles and recognized genres'. The extent to which he refuses the role of breaking new ground is borne out by his comments on

some of the more audacious of his contemporaries. Of Robert Bresson's work, for instance, he has said: 'He is right not to identify that with the cinema and to call it cinematography. . . . As for me, I prefer cinemascope.' Of Alain Robbe-Grillet he has been equally devastating: 'Rather than read Robbe-Grillet I prefer to do crossword puzzles because the amount of work required by a crossword puzzle is in the last instance more satisfying than the amount of work required by one of Robbe-Grillet's books.' In this respect Chabrol is best compared to the members of the first post-war generation who likewise used tried formulas and established recipes. For example, all Autant-Lara's major work (original scripts as well as adaptations of classics and current best-sellers) follows a single pattern of form and it is clear that in ten years Chabrol has made little original progress: he has merely refined his basic designs.

The strength of Chabrol in *Les Biches* lies in the handling of actors, which is done with the kind of skill appropriate in a man who defined directing as 'making the actors feel at home, not wasting time placing your camera, and not getting worried'. The roles of the two women are, of course, vividly drawn with the names giving a key to their characters: the manish huntress and her questioning victim. In the crucial role of Frédérique, Stéphane Audran gives a splendid portrayal of a hard, egotistical woman masked behind a brilliant and polished exterior, whose attraction for men and women is easy to see and understand. She captures both the basic calculation, the capacity for being hurt which merely serves as a dynamo for her forceful seizure of the initiative and also the melting quality as she welcomes – but for how long? – the love of a man. Opposite her Jacqueline Sassard plays the kind of opaque role she had too in Losey's *Accident*, retaining the mysteriousness and incalculability so necessary for the mechanics of the action. Trintignant is very much a background figure – more a hunting trophy or status symbol than a real character – but when the role allows it (as in the drinking scene) he seizes his opportunities.

Chabrol may have a personal opinion about the actions of these characters but he does not let this colour his depiction of them. Defining his general attitude he once stated: 'I compel myself to adopt a total objectivity. It isn't easy . . . You must show what you are dealing with if it is true. I should like to make kinds of documentaries.' In *Les Biches* his approach cannot be faulted and he evolves a pattern of relationships from the given data of the characters' person-

alities with all the logic and precision of the working of an algebraic equation. If at the end, with its emotionally gratuitous murder, the film seems a little too calculated to be true, it is not the logic which is at fault, but the fact that life, unlike algebra, does not have neat solutions.

ROY ARMES

FILM CREDITS

producer Andre Genoves, *director* Claude Chabrol, *screenplay* Paul Gegauff and Claude Chabrol, *photography* Jean Rabier, *editor* Jacques Gaillard, *art director* Marc Berthier, *music* Pierre Jansen, *sound* Guy Chichignoud. A Films La Boetie/Alexandra Production. *Cast*: JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT: Paul Thomas, JACQUELINE SASSARD: Why, STEPHANE AUDRAN: Frédérique, NANE GERMON: Violetta, SERGE BENTO: Bookseller. 98 mins. Distributed by Cincenta Film Distributors Ltd., 147/149 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

IF. . . .

Lindsay Anderson, 1968

Lindsay Anderson began his career as a film director making social realist documentaries in the tradition of the documentary film makers of the thirties. His latest film is non-narrative in form and is structurally akin to the style of some of the leading Continental directors, especially Godard. Like so many of Godard's films, *If. . . .* is related in chapters and episodes; some of the episodes are very short, a few lines of dialogue, or even a single shot. But they are economically used to build up a series of portraits and references, each with its own significance in the analysis that the film undertakes. The detailed social observation of his earlier films is conveyed here by simple and straightforward camerawork. The style is very bare, stripped to its essentials, so that one is never made aware of the camera. The film is further simplified by the deliberate creation of cardboard figures who represent different attitudes and beliefs: symbols which are worked out in the film.

The school in *If. . . .* is a caricature of that sort of institution. It is prison-like, cut off from the outside world and having its own vocabulary for that world. In structure it is authoritarian, insisting upon conformity to its own established modes of behaviour. When Mick returns from his vacation, he shaves his moustache off before showing his face to anybody. The Whips rule with brutal autocratic control; Mr.

David Spiers is an assistant editor at Millbank Films

alities with all the logic and precision of the working of an algebraic equation. If at the end, with its emotionally gratuitous murder, the film seems a little too calculated to be true, it is not the logic which is at fault, but the fact that life, unlike algebra, does not have neat solutions.

ROY ARMES

FILM CREDITS

producer Andre Genoves, *director* Claude Chabrol, *screenplay* Paul Gegauff and Claude Chabrol, *photography* Jean Rabier, *editor* Jacques Gaillard, *art director* Marc Berthier, *music* Pierre Jansen, *sound* Guy Chichignoud. A Films La Boetie/Alexandra Production. *Cast*: JEAN-LOUIS TRINTIGNANT: Paul Thomas, JACQUELINE SASSARD: Why, STEPHANE AUDRAN: Frédérique, NANE GERMON: Violetta, SERGE BENTO: Bookseller. 98 mins. Distributed by Cincenta Film Distributors Ltd., 147/149 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

IF. . . .

Lindsay Anderson, 1968

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Kemp pathetically acquiesces in the measures Rowntree plans to introduce in order to tighten up discipline in the House. When Denson discovers Mr. Thomas tinkering with his car late one evening, he implies that the new master is breaking an accepted code of behaviour by being up so late. The younger boys are in constant readiness to serve at the feet of the Whips. It is a strictly hierarchical society dependent upon deference and what General Denson describes as the habit of obedience; after Mick has been brutally thrashed by Rowntree, he still murmurs the traditional thanks. The hierarchical system is maintained down through the school so that Machin and Stephans are the Whips of the future. Ritual, an essential feature of school life, whether it is morning chapel, start of term penis inspection, or a 'House Thump', serves to maintain this sort of society.

The headmaster, on the surface a liberal who dislikes the old methods of corporal punishment, is in fact a smooth-talking pragmatist, ensuring that his pupils are ready to meet the challenge of the new technology by introducing lessons in Business Management. For him, as he puts it, the school stands for integrity, scholarship and high standards in entertainment. But he is too imbued with the traditions of public school education to reject its ethics completely. Instead of beating the three rebels after their misdemeanours on the Cadet Force Field Day, he sets them a job which will teach them the value of service – an essential tenet of public school education and emphasized in the following sequence when the boys are framed in one shot against a window dedicated to the memory of old boys who had fallen in the service of the nation. The hypocritical chaplain, in his role as C-in-C of the Cadet Force, represents the Church's dual role in upholding this form of society. Cynically, he uses his position to gain control of the minds of his flock. He captures the mind of Jute, whom we see at the start of the film as a wide-eyed innocent new boy being initiated into the ways of the school. During a mathematics class, the chaplain makes physical contact with him, then later speaks directly to Jute in his strident sermon on betrayal. The last time we see Jute, the chaplain has an arm round his shoulder during a break in field exercises. At the Founders' Day Ceremony the forces of reaction are reinforced by some of its typical products: a jingoistic general who chooses for the theme of his address the view that there is nothing wrong with privilege as long as you are prepared to pay for it in terms of discipline, and a gibbering, faceless bishop.

Sexual frustration and sexual guilt are never far from the surface. Bedtime for Mrs. Kemp means providing musical accompaniment for her husband's singing. When she conducts Mr. Thomas up to his rooms, she hints at her relationship with his predecessor. At meal time, Mick thrusts a sauce bottle in front of her face with phallic intent, 'Do you need this, Mrs. Kemp?' She responds by self-consciously scratching herself. Whilst the rest of the school are on a Cadet Field Day exercise, she wanders the corridors and dormitories, alone and naked, caressing the boys' possessions. Denson cannot disguise his own homosexual tendencies by dismissing such practices as disgusting and adolescent. When Rowntree assigns Phillips to sweat for Denson, Denson eyes him longingly from beneath his bedclothes. Sexual guilt is exploited in similar fashion by other members of the community, so when Stephans goes to the chaplain to confess his dirty thoughts, the latter can barely suppress the pleasure he is deriving from such a confession.

Instinctual feelings have no place in this society. The school has its outlets like the rugby field and the Cadet Force for containing such feelings. At the rugby match, the Matron becomes an hysterical maniac as she yells – 'Fight! Fight!' On the Field Day exercise, the unemotional Peanuts, who in the previous sequence had rejected without comment the bullet handed to him by Mick, becomes a sadistic killer as he gives some young privates a lesson in the use of the bayonet. Peanuts is the extreme example of somebody who is emotionally frigid. At night when most of the boys' thoughts turn to sex ('Whatever you're doing now, Stephans, don't!'), Peanuts gazes at the stars through his telescope. Given the opportunity to have a look, Mick tilts it down on to his girlfriend's bedroom. Whilst Mick is crucified on the parallel bars taking his ritualized beating from Rowntree, Peanuts continues, without concern, his study of microbes whilst the younger boys listen in trepidation. In such an atmosphere moral attitudes become a source of self-doubt and confusion. As Phillips confesses to Wallace, he does not know for sure whether his mother has remarried, he does not really care about such things, but then he starts to wonder whether he should care. Honest feelings are intellectualized away in this community. The lessons on which we eavesdrop are all, in essence, cerebral ones. The history master tries to introduce a wide-ranging topic for discussion, nobody has anything to say, they sit in silence; but when he introduces a narrower subject for them to write about, it

develops into an academic battle of wits between himself and Mick.

In direct contrast to these attitudes, stand Mick and his friends. They are the apostles of pure feelings and instincts. Regarded by the Whips as indecent and a degenerate, Mick is the high-priest of primitivism. He wears a necklace of teeth as a charm. Denson responds to this predictably by confiscating it because it is a breeding ground for bacteria. The rebels are joined in brotherhood by the ritualistic spilling of blood. It is an important symbol for them, as Mick in the fencing sequence and Wallace in the thrashing sequence show. Even the darts that Mick fires at his pin-ups are flighted with red feathers, adding to their visual impact as they hit their target. The purity of their feelings is expressed in the sexual relationships. The scene in the gymnasium (shot in soft monochrome with no realistic sound effects, just a music track) in which the attraction between Phillips and Wallace flowers is beautiful in its simplicity and honesty. Similarly, Mick's instinctual feelings are expressed in the café sequence, when he and the girl – after clawing at each other in imitation of tigers (earlier we have seen Mick cutting out a picture of a lion) – make violent love on the floor as his personal theme tune 'Sanctus' from 'The Missa Luba' reaches a climax on the jukebox. Afterwards they link hands and along with Johnny circle in unity on the motor-cycle to a musical background. The effect is one of sublimity and peace in contrast to the earlier motor-cycle sequence where the use of subjective camera and realistic sound effects forces us to share their experience as they speed along the roads.

Under continual provocation from the Whips, Mick, believing that revolution and violence are the only pure acts, determines to translate his feelings into political action. Sexual feelings and political feelings come together as they were earlier represented in the pin-up of the Black Power fighter over which Mick enthused. Once they have discovered the armoury of weapons in the course of clearing out the Chapel loft as a punishment for their behaviour on the Field Day, the seal has been set. It is during this sequence in the loft that the strangest sequence in the film occurs. Having broken open a cupboard, Mick steps forward and picks up a glass jar containing a human foetus. At this moment, the girl appears, takes it from him, carefully replaces it in the cupboard and closes the door. What does this sudden confrontation with birth, amidst all the other relics of death, the

stuffed birds and marble busts, mean? Do the hopes of the future lie with the unborn? Is it all we can do to clear the ground of these anachronistic figures who belong to a past age? Now the symbols of pure feelings and instincts – Mick, Johnny, Wallace, Phillips and the girl are in their place ready for the final holocaust. And when the headmaster (the symbol of down-to-earth rationality) steps forward to stop the slaughter, the girl (the symbol of animal-like instincts) with cold efficiency shoots him straight through the forehead. A few instants later an explosion obliterates the ground where he stood. The elaborate symbolism which has been built up throughout the film is resolved. The firing resumes; the final image is of Mick firing, his gun trained on us, the audience; then silence.

Only during these final scenes does the connection between *If. . .* and *This Sporting Life* become clear. Mick like Arthur Machin is a figure who can only respond to his environment in physical terms. Mick says earlier. 'One man can change the world with a bullet in the right place.' Only now do we realize that this is the full extent of his political philosophy. Disquietingly, at the end, we find ourselves behind the gatling gun fighting for pure instincts *per se*; in other words in a fascist position. The fascist implications of the theme of the film are made even more disturbing coming as they do from somebody who has always aligned himself with the left.

DAVID SPIERS

FILM CREDITS

producers Michael Medwin and Lindsay Anderson, *director* Lindsay Anderson, *screenplay* David Sherwin, *from the original script 'Crusaders'* by David Sherwin and John Howlett, *director of photography* Miroslav Ondricek, *music composed and conducted by* Marc Wilkinson, *Sanctus from the 'Missa Luba'* (Philips Recording), *production designed by* Jocelyn Herbert, *editor* David Gladwell, *assistant editors* Ian Rakoff and Michael Ellis, *wardrobe* Shura Cohen, *makeup* Betty Blattner, *cameraman* Chris Menges, *assistant director* John Stoneman, *production manager* Gavrik Losey, *sound recordist* Christian Wangler. A Paramount Production. *Cast:* MALCOLM McDOWELL: Mick, DAVID WOOD: Johnny, RICHARD WARWICK: Wallace, CHRISTINE NOONAN: The Girl, ROBERT SWAN: Rowntree, HUGH THOMAS: Denson, GUY ROSS: Stephans, PETER JEFFREY: Headmaster, MONA WASHBOURNE: Matron, ARTHUR LOWE: Housemaster, GRAHAM CROWDEN: History Master, GEOFFREY CHATER: Chaplain, MARY MacLEOD: Housemaster's Wife, BEN ARIS: Undermaster. 111 mins. Distributed by Paramount Film Service Ltd., 162 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

ROSEMARY'S BABY

Roman Polanski, 1968

In an interview in *Cahiers du Cinema*, Polanski discussed the tension between the elements of the rigorous and the baroque in his nature. *Knife in the Water* was 'more what I like to make after having compelled myself to make it', *Repulsion* was 'more on the side of what I like to see'. The films he has made outside Poland might appear to belong in various degrees to this baroque inclination. They have strong elements of the bizarre and the macabre. This mode is one which Polanski suggested in a recent television interview must be recognized as only one of several arbitrary means by which an audience's emotions may be stirred. Important to him in the cinema is the creation of 'atmosphere'. 'I like to be afraid, to laugh, to cry or to be moved.'

It is interesting to consider why his films made in the West are of this macabre variety, and why *Knife in the Water*, made in Poland, is divergent in kind from them. Polanski is consciously affected by the country in which he makes a film. 'Certain subjects are better suited to certain countries than to others. *Repulsion*, for example is not a Polish subject. . . . It does not correspond to the climate of the country. I do not mean there are no neurotics in Poland but no doubt there are fewer of them; in any case neurosis is not expressed that way. . . . I wanted to show precisely a certain kind of disorder and not another. Therefore, I had to do so where that disorder exists.' 'Excellent' as he has claimed his relations with Poland to be, in the past, Western Europe and the United States provide more fertile ground for the examination and analysis of such disorders. *Repulsion* deals with a society obsessed by a respect for outward appearance, where neurotic virgins enjoy status as nuns (indicated by a reference to *The Devil and the Nun*) where the beauty cult thinly conceals a cynical sexual revulsion and where the landlord's visit to receive his rent becomes an eager attempt to enforce the *droit de seigneur*. Polanski's heroine, partly alienated by nationality from her surroundings is at one level the means by which the moral squalor is exposed. In her hands the scissors that should be instruments for preserving appearances become agents of mutilation. Similarly, a razor becomes a murder weapon. Rabbit prepared for eating is left to rot, decomposing corpses lie unburied. The walls which hide such sights from the world begin to crack open. In *Cul de Sac* we are presented with three

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national stereotypes of the Western world in their most comic and degraded form. An incongruous couple – glamorous French tart and masochistic, ineffectual Englishman unsure of his role – are menaced by a broken-down American gangster who has been abandoned by his boss. The juggling for power and shifting alliances of American, Frenchwoman and Englishman are a quasi-allegorical reflection of the relations between the decadent powers – France, America and Britain. As the film is made in Britain the final symbol we are left with is that of the abandoned Englishman weeping on his solitary rock surrounded by water.

With *Rosemary's Baby*, the structure and values of American society fall under Polanski's scrutiny with disturbing fascination and a sureness of treatment that make *Repulsion* and *Cul de Sac* seem like preliminary runs before the real performance.

In its barest outline the story is simple. Guy and Rosemary Woodhouse (John Cassavetes and Mia Farrow) move into an apartment house inhabited by witches and in particular by the son of the notorious Adrian Marcato. Guy, bribed by the lure of success as an actor, is won over to the witches' cause and agrees to Rosemary's bearing of the witches' Messiah. At first ignorant of this and finally unable to destroy the plot against her child, Rosemary, overcoming horror and reluctance, is compelled by maternal instinct to assume her role as mother, rocking the black-draped cradle. It is a film which is effective on several levels – the build-up of suspense, a description of paranoia and an onslaught on received social morality. It is from this third angle that I intend to discuss it since it appears to be crucial to an understanding of the work on any terms. Indeed, Polanski has suggested that a challenge to such a morality is fundamental to his aims.

Against a background of New York's dun-coloured roof tops, sugar-pink tiles unroll, accompanied on the soundtrack by the childish toneless voice of Mia Farrow humming an innocuous lullaby. For some reason this seems to be an ominous touch, related perhaps to the incongruity of pinkness and song against such buildings. The use of a single voice in this way (e.g. in *The Innocents*) has been known to herald darker events. The film ends in the same manner and we are left with an impression of its circular structure. I stress this, since Ira Levin's novel from which the plot and

most of the dialogue has been drawn follows a straightforward narrative line, leading to an end that is at least open to optimistic interpretation by the adherents of individualism.

From the outset, Rosemary is separated from the other characters by an outgoing unsentimental innocence. She is constitutionally unable to join in her actor husband's jokes at the expense of the caretaker who shows them round the flat; even a patently ridiculous impersonation of Richard Burton must be disclaimed. She is a doubting Catholic. Her dream fantasies are peopled with nuns and Popes and are overshadowed by a sense of personal guilt. Characteristically, figures from her everyday life assume such roles. The angry nun from her childhood rasps out accusations in the tones of their next door neighbour Minnie Castevet (Ruth Gordon). The fantasies accompanying her rape include a figure, in the guise of Pope, and Guy, who merges with the Devil. Intuitively she grasps at a knowledge of evil long before she can verbalize it, when she is still at the stage of brushing off Hutch's warnings about the sinister reputation of their newly chosen apartment house with a suggestion that such incidents must be associated with most buildings of that kind. At the first dinner party with Minnie and Roman Castevet, the conversation turns to religion and specifically the forthcoming visit of Pope Paul to New York. Roman, Minnie, and Guy, all non-believers, decry religion on the grounds of hypocrisy, commercialism and squandered money. Religion involves putting on an 'act'. Guy has played a minor role in *Luther* and Roman Castevet suggests, has contributed in a convincing manner to a play exposing religious hypocrisy. Guy, whose first words are a lie reveals himself as an arch-hypocrite, acting the convincing role of sincere young husband. For all his ironic comment on the 'artistic thrills' to be had from making commercials, the Yamaha television advertisement in which we see him is peculiarly telling as he responds to the highpowered selling of the product with an easy 'O.K. Let's go' (or words to that effect) – an economical way of suggesting a personality moving with the tide.

The roles with which he is associated become increasingly repellent the more deeply he is involved with the witches' aims. A rival's blindness apparently effected by witchcraft, allows him the opportunity to take over the part of a cripple in a play. The crutches on which he practises moving round the apartment and the lines he reads which are not his own,

suggest his moral state. During the rape sequence, we are shown his face and hands as they are naturally, then menacingly streaked with dark make-up, and ultimately indistinguishable from those of Satan himself. Rosemary's enlightened cry 'This is no dream this is really happening' indicates the interpretation which must be placed upon the experience. The rape is a literal expression of her introduction of the social evil which surrounds her. There is no conflict between believing in the 'rational' explanation that Guy himself has raped her or in Roman's assertion that Satan is the child's father. In a metaphysical sense Guy is identical with Satan. His act is not merely that of the casual 'necrophile'. It is literally Satanic and we are prepared for such an interpretation by the variety of roles he appears to adopt with ease – hence the suspicion which attaches to performance, and the assumption of roles in this film. Roman and Minnie in their exaggerated costume and lurid make-up perform a stylish marital comedy act. On the other hand, Teresa Gionoffrio, whom Rosemary at first mistakes for a famous actress and who herself denies any such resemblance, becomes an apparently mysterious victim of the Castevets who have behaved to her ostensibly like 'parents'.

Society's official myths are also associated with showy ceremony and symbol. An incongruous scarlet Santa Claus collecting money in the street shakes his bell challengingly at the audience. The Pope's appearance at a massed rally at Yankee Stadium is relayed as high drama on television. The windows of commercial buildings display an idealized model of a crib with Virgin, manger and sheep. Rosemary's image of the Pope associated with the witches by their charm which is substituted for his ring, suggests that the inherent evil in such roles lies submerged beneath the social surface. Catholicism and witchcraft combine inextricably in her fantasies and are both part of the same evil.

The 'emancipation' from superstition paraded by Guy, Roman and Minnie is illusory. They are dissociated only from its acceptable social manifestations, not from the sources from which it springs. A cross-section of society's bores, eccentrics and nonentities are together capable of untold ruthlessness, violence, and destruction. Those who recognize the reality of such evil and who attempt to expose it or to dissociate themselves are eliminated like the deceased Mrs. Gardenia whose last words Rosemary reads: '... than merely the intriguing pastime I believed it to be. I can no longer associate myself ...' or Hutch, whose efforts to

provide Rosemary with the key to her own sickness and to warn her of the Castevets results in a similar death.

On the whole, however, the chances of exposure of such social rottenness are small as Rosemary discovers when she confides her suspicions to Dr. Hill. For a moment it appears to Rosemary and to us that she has succeeded in convincing him of the plot surrounding her and her unborn child. Whilst he disclaims belief in witchcraft, he suggests that the city contains many maniacs. However, when he learns that her obstetrician is the eminent Dr. Sapirstein we sense a subtle reaction on his part. Rosemary's accusations of such a man must be the accusations of a mentally sick woman. He betrays her into the hands of Guy and Sapirstein showing considerable deference to the latter. Bourgeois society's defence against those who see too clearly is a quick diagnosis of mental illness and the permanently poised hypodermic needle threatening sedation and oblivion. When Rosemary finally looks at her child she cries: 'What have you done to his eyes?' Unlike the novel, Polanski's film does not show us the baby. Here, Rosemary's question is metaphysical and receives a metaphysical reply. 'He has his Father's eyes.' 'Satan is his father.' The question is one of moral vision. The child has been corrupted from the moment of conception. The group care lavished on it before and after birth is an expression of its dependent relationship to its environment. His birth and parentage are planned and his vision is the vision of the society that has produced him.

Rosemary's attempt at individual rebellion and escape is doomed. In a symbolic blue negligée she can only accept the Satanic Madonna's role with which the witches confront her – 'Hail Rosemary'. Her maternal instinct drives her into the niche that awaits her as she begins to rock the cradle and sing the lullaby heard at the beginning.

Rosemary's Baby appears to belong directly to the *Psycho* tradition. This was a commonplace connection with *Repulsion* but seems more fundamentally relevant to the later work. Both films suggest the deep layer of horror concealed beneath the surface veneer of the habitual and the socially acceptable. Both are concerned with the inadequacy of glib psycho-analytic jargon, ever ready to rationalize the unmentionable when it begins to obtrude. In *Rosemary's Baby*, as in *Psycho*, a vision of the horrific and macabre bursting into scenes of normal life is thrust upon the audience. An attempt is made to force a confrontation with a social and

moral squalor that society on the whole chooses to ignore. Although Polanski has said that *Psycho* is not his favourite amongst Hitchcock's films, he considered that it was impossible for a film such as *Repulsion* to have remained uninfluenced by it. *Rosemary's Baby* appears to carry deliberate references to it in the brief shot of Rosemary in the shower after the rape and the manner in which she carries the pointed kitchen knife. A second influence which can be felt on the film, in the dream fantasy sequences, is that of Fellini and *Ginietta of the Spirits*. Polanski is known to rate Fellini amongst his top three film directors. The almost imperceptible movement from 'reality' to 'fantasy', expressed in an exaggerated change in angle and perspective, the brilliance of the light and the shuffling of established characters into other roles are all reminiscent of Fellini. This influence is thematically relevant, re-emphasizing the disparity between the sense of sin which religion demands and its practised blindness to the sources of evil.

Polanski has said: 'What I like is an extremely realistic setting in which there is something that does not fit with the real. That is what gives an atmosphere.' Applied to *Rosemary's Baby* it is something of an irony since Polanski asks us to distrust the common notion of the real and to extend our understanding of the 'unreal'. Not least amongst the film's virtues is the skilful interaction of the bizarre and the normal even in minor detail. Minnie Castevet for instance, in both aspects of her role as garrulous neighbour and adherent of witchcraft, retains a concern for the wellbeing of her new carpet at the most inappropriate moments. Similarly, in the final scene of the witches' gathering when we might be tempted to forget their integration into normal society, Minnie brings Rosemary a cup of tea telling her it will make her feel better. When Rosemary asks suspiciously what is in it, Minnie replies firmly that it is just plain Lipton tea. Comedy invariably has this kind of function. On another level, Rosemary, ashen faced in a loose red gown, her hair close cropped like some kind of martyr victim (a reference for Bresson's Joan of Arc) is also an elegant woman with a Vidal Sassoon haircut tensely enduring the pain of pregnancy. It is in this sense that Polanski has been able to combine his love of 'magic', 'spectacle' and 'prestidigitation' with a sense of genuine artistic direction.

MARGARET TARRATT

FILM CREDITS

producer William Castle, *associate producer* Dona Holloway, *written for the screen and directed by* Roman Polanski, *from the novel by* Ira Levin, *director of photography* William Fraker, *production designer* Richard Sylbert, *editors* Sam O'steen and Bob Wyman, *art director* Joel Schiller, *assistant director* Daniel J. McCauley, *Miss Farrow's Hair Styles created by* Sydney Guilaroff and Vidal Sassoon, *costume designer* Anthea Sylbert, *makeup* Allan Snyder, *music* Christopher Komeda. A Paramount Production. *Cast:* MIA FARROW: Rosemary Woodhouse, JOHN CASSAVETES: Guy Woodhouse, RUTH GORDON: Minnie Castevet, SIDNEY BLACKMER: Roman Castevet, MAURICE EVANS: Hutch, RALPH BELLAMY: Dr. Sapirstein, ANGELA DORIAN: Terry, PATSY KELLY: Laura-Louise, ELISHA COOK: Mr. Nicklas, EMMALINE HENRY: Elise Dunstan, MARIANNE GORDON: Joan Jellico, PHILIP LEEDS: Dr. Shand, CHARLES GRODIN: Dr. Hill, HOPE SUMMERS: Mrs. Gilmore, WENDY WAGNER: Tiger. 136 mins. Distributed by Paramount Film Service Ltd., 162 Wardour Street, London, W.1.

Books

HOLLYWOOD IN THE FORTIES

Charles Higham & Joel Greenberg. *Tantivy Press*
A. Zwemmer Ltd., 12s 6d

The two Australian authors have made a credible attempt to give a complete portrait of the period in 192 pages (including a ten-page index). Their location or contacts have helped for they have seen a number of key films which have not been generally available in this country for some years, such as Lewis Milestone's *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* (1946), Edmund Goulding's *Nightmare Alley* (1947), Robert Siodmak's *The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry* (1945) and *The Dark Mirror* (1946), Max Ophuls' *Caught* (1949), Henry King's *Wilson* (1944) and Curtis Bernhardt's *A Stolen Life* (1946).

The book has eleven sections, some of which are further sub-divided. Thus 'Action, Outdoor and Pastoral Films' covers 'Swashbucklers', 'Westerns, Actioners' and 'Pastoral, Animal and Children's Films'. Each section contains an overall analysis of each genre as well as examples of the output from major studios. These include good, bad and indifferent films which are relevant as typical samples of the genre.

The book charts and evaluates films of the period in an attempt to justify the authors' personal belief that, viewed as a whole, they constitute an output of unrivalled richness and excellence. The 'addicts' of the B-picture or fans of the lesser personalities such as Audrey Totter or James Craig, or those who follow the careers of such sterling character players as Ray Teal, Frank Faylen or Ellen Corby, will be disappointed. Major films such as Nicholas Ray's *They Live by Night* (1949), Henry Hathaway's *The Dark Corner* (1946) and Ted Tetzlaff's *The Window* (1949) are omitted as they do not fit any one category. These omissions must throw doubts on the book's structure.

Kingsley Canham
works for *The*
Observer and writes
for *Films and Filming*

The introduction covers the general atmosphere at each studio: MGM – the candified artifice of Mayerland and Warners under the iron fist of Jack L. Paramount was famous for its comedies and inherited something of Warner's brand of steamy melodrama when Hal Wallis changed studios (a typical example is Lewis Allen's *Desert Fury* (1947) which introduced Wendell Corey who played a latent homosexual). (A fact which escaped the notice of many contemporary critics). Columbia, lacking the 'star-power', relied on Rita Hayworth, backing her films with slick B-features such as *Undercover Man* (1949, Joseph H. Lewis) and *The Swordsman* (1947, Joseph H. Lewis) which featured Glenn Ford and Larry Parks. Fox's 'hard, brassy, professional approach' produced the lavish musicals starring the 'Pin-up Girl', Betty Grable, Henry King spectaculars and fast-paced semi-documentary thrillers.

Universal, with its smaller output, had to rely on Deanna Durbin musicals and absurd Arabian Nights adventures. RKO had the 'occasional fling at culture' – *Citizen Kane* (1941, Orson Welles), *Crossfire* (1947, Edward Dmytryk) – but relied mainly on B-melodramas many of which starred John Wayne. Eagle-Lion had Joan Bennett whilst Republic had the dubious distinction of offering that great 'cult' figure, the skater-cum-actress Vera Hruba Ralston.

The introduction is precise, coherent and readable. The high quality is maintained with the following section on 'Black cinema' – a world of darkness and violence with a central figure whose motives are usually greed, lust and ambition and whose world is filled with fear. The roots of the genre are set in the grim romanticism of the nineteenth century and its development is illustrated with reference to Curtiz' *The Unsuspected* (1947), Daves' *Dark Passage* (1947) and Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941). These films match a romantic visual mode to stories of fatal women and desperate men. Hitchcock, Siodmak, Lang and Preminger among others are accorded special treatment as 'purists' of the genre, whilst Sam Wood, John Brahm, Irving Pichel and Lewis Allen receive acknowledgement for their closely allied period melodramas. These provide a bridge between the 'purists' and the 'grey' film directors who merely laugh at terror and cruelty or decorate it. They are not named but presumably include John Huston, Frank Tuttle, Stuart Heisler and Howard Hawks as they were the main adaptors of Graham Greene and Raymond Chandler, both of whom are cited as sources for 'grey' material.

Fantasy and horror films are first related to the blossoming of the genre in the '30s. Their gentler atmosphere and content of the like material in the '40s became tied to violence and stresses of the war. The film-makers preoccupation with emissaries from Heaven and Hell and their whimsical approach to their material is noted. Terming the nasty spirit in Lewis Allen's *The Uninvited* (1944) as 'disagreeable' is rather an understatement. The scene in which the spirit bursts open the doors of a room and materializes in a thin cloud of smoke, and the climatic scene in which the heroine is nearly lured over a cliff by the malevolent spirit are hardly examples of a disagreeable temperament. Both retain their effectiveness whilst being in the best tradition of good horror – the power of suggestion working better than any horrific visual trick or monster. Although Universal was the most prolific studio in this field, RKO maintained the highest standard with films produced by Val Lewton and directed by Jacques Tourneur, Mark Robson and Robert Wise. The contribution of Val Lewton is accorded a special section in the course of which the over-rated *Cat People* (1942) is placed in its proper perspective. The dull *Isle of the Dead* (1945), however, is vastly over-praised. Although the authors point out the succeeding decade's obsession with science-fiction, they neglect to point out the total absence of any 'space exploration' films from the '40s output. Indeed there would appear to be a large gap in this field from *Things to Come* (1936) to *Destination Moon* and *Rocket-Ship XM*, both released in 1950, with the single exception of the Flash Gordon serials.

Sociological films came into their own for a brief period in the latter '40s mainly thanks to 20th Century Fox and former 'March of Time' producer, Louis De Rochemont. Location shooting became the order of the day. Racial prejudice, anti-Semitism, insanity, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, etc., became topical film material. The point is well made that the results are often high-minded and sentimental, but the still current influence of 'policiers' or straight realistic crime thrillers such as Dassin's *The Naked City* (1948) is overlooked. There seems to be some discrepancy also in the statement that *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940, John Ford) was only technically a '40s film since it drew its intellectual and emotional sustenance from the preceding decade but still rating it as the first example of sociology in the decade. Ford's later *Tobacco Road* and Milestone's *Of Mice and Men* (1940) are favourably examined at length, whilst Wellman's *The Ox-Bow Incident*

(1942) is dismissed as having the air of a competent television play. Domestic American politics were also discussed in Capra's *State of the Union* (1947) and Rossen's famous *All the King's Men* (1949) which ran 169 minutes originally but lost an hour prior to its release. Dieterle's *The Searching Wind* (1946) sounds an intriguing attempt at analysis of the rise and changing face of Fascism as the film portrays the life of a fictional American Ambassador.

As evidence that films overlap categories, further mention is made of the virulent anti-Russian films – *The Iron Curtain* (1948, William Wellman) and R. G. Springsteen's *The Red Menace* (1949). George Sidney's *The Red Danube* (1949) would appear to be a leading contender for the prize of the most ludicrous plot of the period. Kazan's *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) and *Pinky* (1949) are dismissed as patently false, whilst Dmytryk's *Crossfire* (1947) and Clarence Brown's *Intruder in the Dust* (1949) are highly praised.

In relation to total output, crime films are discussed briefly. The suggestion that Crane Wilbur's *Canon City* (1948) is a more credible film than Dassin's *Brute Force* (1947) surely cannot be taken seriously. No mention is made of Anthony Mann's *T-Men* (1947) or *Raw Deal* (1948) both of which are 'location' pictures in the de Rochemont style. The latter had a superior script telling of Dennis O'Keefe's prison break and journey across country with a sympathetic parole officer (Marsha Hunt) and a moll (Claire Trevor) to get even with the villain (Raymond Burr) who had framed him and then arranged his escape, hoping it would fail. The tension between the three fugitives is extremely well drawn and is increased by neat editing and the stylish mobile camerawork by John Alton. *T-Men* used a semi-documentary approach to tell how two Treasury agents infiltrate a gang of counterfeiters. Set against a variety of backgrounds – back street hotels, sleazy night clubs, steam baths, docks – tension mounts as one of the agents is identified and his fellow agent is forced to kill him. An off-screen commentary lessens the visual impact at times but Mann develops the narrative expertly. The highlight of the film is the killing of an informer in a Turkish bath (by now a cliché), stylishly photographed by Alton whose low key lighting creates mood. It is also notable for the use made of the sides of the screen.

The influence of European refugees, the addition of national propaganda to staple anti-Nazi films resulted in

unrealistic atmospheres in films depicting occupied Europe. One of the most interesting films which has since vanished from circulation is John Farrow's *The Hitler Gang* (1944), which is described as 'a bitingly intelligent and impressively mounted version of the Nazi rise to power'. One of the film's chief distinctions was the gallery of portrayals by emigré actors of the men who had forced them to flee their homes. Two years before, Farrow had made *Wake Island* which is dismissed in one line but had a well-balanced script and well-staged action sequences. The propaganda was played down, making the film one of the better and less dated American efforts.

Comedy war films – intentional and un-intentional – including works by Vincent Sherman, Richard Thorpe, Chaplin, McCarey, Lubitsch and a forgotten early work by cameraman director Ted Tetzlaff *World Premiere* (1941), were fairly numerous but the bulk emphasized Nazi cruelty to civilians and the Resistance movements. MGM, however, turned 'Anglo-phobic'.

The war had also created an overflow of stranded literary talents in California who were used for writing 'prestige' literary adaptations and scripts for biographies of saints, authors, politicians and scientists. The authors hold that the best of the bunch include Curtiz' *The Sea Wolf* (1941), Peter Godfrey's *The Woman in White* (1948) and Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* (1944); whilst the disasters included Harry Lachmann's *The Loves of Edgar Allan Poe* (1942), *Devotion* (1943, Curtis Bernhardt) which was about the Brontë sisters, and Siodmak's *The Great Sinner* (1949). A notable omission is Douglas Sirk's *A Scandal in Paris* (1946) which features George Sanders at his suave best as Vidocq, a thief and blackguard who talked his way into becoming Prefect of Police. Intelligent direction, the constant changing from comedy to drama, the use of parody in an already witty script and the overall competence of a largely foreign cast playing the action to the hilt combine to make a highly enjoyable piece of 'kitsch'.

The section on Westerns is interesting as it covers a wide field. It starts with Wyler's *The Westerner* (1940) and continues with the work of Lang, Hathaway, and Hawks. A large section is devoted to *Duel in the Sun* (1946) which details the many people involved in its making. Notable omissions in this section include Tourneur's *Canyon Passage* (1946) with its lyrical scenes of pioneer life and Bruce Humberstone's

Fury at Furnace Creek (1948), another of the films which pre-date the sympathetic attitude towards the Indians for which Daves' *Broken Arrow* (1950) is famous. Pastoral films such as Renoir's *Swamp Water* (1941) and *The Southerner* (1945) are found wanting because of unconvincing casting. The section on the 'First Ladies' of the '40s' will, for many, be the major one in the book and they may find the underlying flippancy of the approach irritating. Bette Davis is described as 'seizing parts on their own level and milking them dry', whilst Crawford is noted for 'always walking through hers with an extraordinary air of grandeur'. Barbara Stanwyck's presence was 'briskly energetic and hearty'; Ann Sheridan had 'a pleasantly charming and direct personality', whilst Ida Lupino 'tough and intelligent, remains the most appealing'; nearly all of Greer Garson's pictures were 'unbearably glutinous'. Their films are listed in varying detail which will please or outrage respective fans. Unfortunately, Olivia de Havilland, Ginger Rogers and Joan Fontaine don't make the 'First XI'.

Comedy is divided into two sections – sophisticated and slap-stick. The master of the former, Preston Sturges, is labelled 'gifted but erratic' and his career is covered in detail.

Musicals are sub-divided into 'repeats' and 'originals'. The old, old backstage, putting on a show, theme was typified by the Garland – Rooney MGM vehicles. The star story is personified in the Betty Grable – John Payne musicals at Fox. The tributes to classical musicians and light musical biographies comprise the former. The field was dominated by MGM and Fox although Columbia turned out Charles Vidor's *Cover Girl* (1945, with Rita Hayworth, naturally). Fox had craftsmen but were eclipsed by MGM. Ironically, one of Fox's best musicals was done by Busby Berkeley on loan from MGM. The Warner musicals concentrated on light composers as subject material, producing lives of George Gershwin, George M. Cohan, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter before finishing the decade with Doris Day. By the middle '40s MGM had the field to themselves.

No matter how hard you try, you can't please everybody but Messrs. Higham and Greenberg have tried. Their book is important as the first to attempt to evaluate the films of the '40s as a whole. Many of the films of the period are still around and are still fresh in the minds of many filmgoers who cut their teeth on them. This book provides a useful start

for future research into specific genres, as the analyses have the merit of thoroughness. The opinions, however, are very personal and will antagonize some readers. The text is enhanced by the thirty glossy, well-chosen (and rare) stills and the production is in keeping with the standard of the International Film Guide Series.

KINGSLEY CANHAM

BILLY WILDER

Axel Madsen. *Secker & Warburg*, 15s.

Axel Madsen's book is primarily a chronology of Billy Wilder's work in the cinema, with numerous anecdotes and details about the making of the films and their subsequent reception, but little solid consideration of the works themselves. The overall impression (which is reinforced by Mr. Madsen's style) is of a series of 'popular' articles strung together, full of interesting facts, but lacking in depth. The most rewarding aspect of the book is in the portrait built up of Wilder himself. Madsen quotes him liberally, and though one may not be surprised to find that Wilder expresses much the same opinions outside his films as he does in them, many of his comments are illuminating. Also instructive is the information Madsen provides about Wilder's method of working. The finished films, however, are sadly neglected. Even *Sunset Boulevard*, generally accepted as Wilder's most important film, receives little more than a couple of pages of textual discussion. Whatever one's personal attitude to Wilder, he deserves better than this.

Particularly poorly served are the films which Wilder scripted in Hollywood in the 1930s. It was these which established his reputation and they are integral to his career. Madsen quotes Wilder as saying that 80 per cent of a picture is writing, but then proceeds to do little more than mention the Hollywood films which Wilder wrote prior to 1942, when he became the director as well as the writer of his works. It was at this early stage (in 1938, on *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*) that Wilder commenced his famous association with Charles Brackett. Throughout his career Wilder has always written his scripts in partnership, and Brackett was his regular collaborator in the early years, just as I. A. L. Diamond has been over the last ten years. The partnership with Brackett was particularly fruitful. Together they scripted seven films before Wilder began directing, and then,

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with the exception of *Double Indemnity* (1944), all the films which Wilder directed up to and including *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). Wilder may have been the dominant voice in the partnership (as his subsequent works would suggest) but few would dispute that these years were, overall, the most artistically successful of his career.

The films which Brackett and Wilder scripted between 1938 and 1941 comprise an important prelude to Wilder's debut as a director. They are characterized by the wit, cynicism and rather cruel humour found in many of Wilder's films. A Wilder script tends to satirize everyone, including the hero and heroine. Lubitsch manages to counteract this in *Ninotchka* (1939), which does have considerable charm (not a Wilder ingredient!), but with *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife* he is much less successful and it is Wilder's personality which dominates the film. The result is a good example of the way in which Wilder's humour, if uncontrolled, can turn sour. (A recent and more serious example is *One, Two, Three* (1961).) Gary Cooper is a millionaire who absent-mindedly treats his marriages like his business deals and Claudette Colbert, his eighth bride, decides it is time he was taught a lesson. So she marries him exclusively for his money, speeding up the divorce by being as 'unwifely' as possible from the honeymoon onwards. Despite some hilarious scenes (e.g. when he endeavours unsuccessfully to apply the techniques of *The Taming of the Shrew*), the indignities to which Cooper is subjected are cruel, particularly so when he ends up in a straight jacket in a mental home. A crowing fellow resident indicates *The Blue Angel* as Wilder's source, but here the degradation is supposed to be funny. *Ball of Fire* (1941) is another of the scripts which might well have turned out similarly (again the victim is Cooper) but for Hawks's ability to confer dignity upon his hero throughout, and despite, all the humiliations. However, it should be acknowledged that Wilder introduced 'sick' humour long before it became fashionable and, to its apologists, his films probably have a refreshing air of insolently challenging the pervasive 'rosiness' of most comedy films of the time.

Three of the Brackett and Wilder scripts were directed by Mitchell Leisen, a lightweight and yet rather elegant director, and although *Arise my Love* (1940) and *Hold Back the Dawn* (1941) are successful only in part, *Midnight* (1939) is an example of their writing at its most brilliant and incisive. The construction of the scenario, in which different levels of deception are introduced and then multiplied throughout

the film, strongly anticipates Wilder's own films. Wilder is fond of having his characters deceive one another, frequently in the most outrageous manner – Ginger Rogers as a 12-year-old in *The Major and the Minor* (1942), transvestism in *Some Like it Hot* (1959), and Jack Lemmon's English Lord in *Irma La Douce* (1963). However, *Midnight*, in which each of the five principals has his own particular line of deception and some even sustain different lines with different people, surpasses them all. At one point we find John Barrymore on the phone imitating the voice of the fictitious measles-stricken daughter of Don Ameche, who himself listens incredulously since he only that moment invented the child. Even *Some Like it Hot* does not show Wilder's flair for bizarre comedy quite as vividly. It is set in upper-class Paris, but one suspects that some of the barbs were intended for those closer to home – especially the sequence of Hedda Hopper's exclusive soirée, which is very probably the sort of pretentious 'cultural' evening indulged in by American 'high society'. The film ends with a penetrating satire on the legal profession – a court room sequence in which a couple who have never been married are examined solemnly for grounds for divorce.

Commencing with *The Major and the Minor*, Billy Wilder has directed twenty films in twenty-six years. In quality these have ranged from the mediocre (*The Emperor Waltz* (1947)) to the possibly great (*Sunset Boulevard*) and the extent of this range is not easy to explain. (Madsen does not really attempt to do so.) With most Hollywood directors of any talent, major variations in standard can usually be attributed to effects of 'the system', such as unsuitable assignments or the vast complications of studio interference. Wilder however has always contrived to make films the way *he* wants, despite box office failures and despite his having twice chosen subjects to which the studio was strongly opposed (*The Lost Weekend* (1945) and *Ace in the Hole* (1951)).

In endeavouring to see why some of Wilder's films should be so much better than others, it is necessary to look at his overall career and examine his 'personal traits'. It is in this direction that Madsen's lack of 'solid consideration' is most apparent. He refers to Wilder as 'about Hollywood's only auteur' and says this is 'because of a point of view'. Yet he cites only two examples to characterize Wilder's point of view – the transformation of the hero of *Stalag 17* (1952) from the 'spiritless' stage version to Wilder's 'hardboiled heckler' and the moral of *The Apartment* (1960) that 'social

success is only possible at the cost of the lowest compromises'. Both exemplify Wilder's cynicism, but surely, not all his films do this so effectively. For example William Holden's Sefton in *Stalag 17*, although representative of a certain type of Wilder hero – the cynical opportunist – could easily be seen as a reaction against the patriotic Wilder heroes of the war years (as in *Arise my Love* and *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943) in particular). The narration over the opening of *Stalag 17* (Wilder's use of a narration, or interior monologue, in his films is usually good and even those without one often have a little introductory piece) is in fact largely concerned with dismissing 'heroic' war films. It is as if, retrospectively, Wilder had become cynical about his own attitude during the war years. Certainly it would be difficult to question his cynicism in *Stalag 17*. Even Sefton's seemingly friendly adieu to his fellow P.O.W.s at his moment of escape has a faked air which suggests Wilder was merely 'making the gesture' without meaning it. And it is moments like this which provoke serious criticism of Wilder's attitude. Madsen refers to them as 'little sops of sentiment' and they are so obviously included for 'audience softening' purposes that they are embarrassing. The endings of *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), *The Apartment* and *Meet Whiplash Willie* (1966) all have this feel and somehow one senses that their sudden sentimentality betrays in Wilder a contempt for his audience.

It is a mistake to regard Wilder as an auteur in the sense that Ford or Hitchcock is, where each film is recognizably their own. Wilder has on occasions made genre-films which show little of his 'vitriolic edge' – *Five Graves to Cairo*, *The Emperor Waltz*, *Sabrina Fair* (1954), *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1956), and *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957). And of these both the war film (*Five Graves to Cairo*) and the 'bio-pic.' (*The Spirit of St. Louis*: Charles Lindbergh) are honourable examples of their kind. More than is generally acknowledged, Wilder's films are influenced by his script-writing partner(s). He is not a director with a strong visual style and for this reason alone one has to dispute Madsen's 'about Hollywood's only auteur'; it is a judgment that simply does not stand up to scrutiny.

The films with Brackett, for example, tend to be more perceptive and carry more conviction than most of the later works. (The one exception is *The Emperor Waltz* which is a Hapsburg Romance à la Lubitsch, so alien to their talents they could not even make it amusing, let alone convincing.) *The Seven Year Itch* is at least as much Axelrod as Wilder.

And Diamond introduced a sense of time into Wilder's cinema, which in *Love in the Afternoon* (1957) in particular (but also in *The Apartment*) is quite eloquently used in an Antonioniesque sense of minutes drifting by. . . . Closer examination suggests Wilder's directors of photography also play an important role: John F. Seitz creating a dark expressionistic style in the early dramas and Charles Lang Jr. giving polish and lustre to *Sabrina Fair* and *Some Like it Hot* – salvaging the first and considerably enhancing the effect of the second.

Wilder's more characteristic films (i.e. excluding the genre-films above) may be drawn up along a line extending from serious drama to frenetic comedy, with *Ace in the Hole* and *Some Like it Hot* at the two extremes and *A Foreign Affair* (1948) somewhere in the middle. If one looks at the films this way, an important point emerges – that the more comedy Wilder injects into a film, the more absurd it tends to become. Whatever their inherent merits, *Some Like it Hot*, *Irma La Douce*, *One, Two, Three* and even *The Major and the Minor* exist at a level of fantasy which the audience may accept, but which becomes quite preposterous, as the endings of these films show. Other satires, such as *A Foreign Affair*, *Stalag 17*, *Kiss Me Stupid* (1964), and *Meet Whiplash Willie*, do retain a realistic base, but they are still embellished with much that is ludicrous, in both situation and character. It is as if Wilder's act of satirizing tends to make the films move towards the fantastic.

The movement from reality to fantasy and the powerful attraction that the latter can exercise is in fact a central motif of Wilder's cinema. Time and again his characters become gripped by some kind of fantasy, either through a role they are playing (Jack Lemmon in *Some Like it Hot* coming to think of himself as a woman, or in *Irma La Douce* becoming jealous of his alter-ego) or simply in their imaginations (madness in *Sunset Boulevard*, hallucinations in *The Seven Year Itch*). And if the expression 'fantasy' is used in its widest sense, one can argue that, at least so far as Wilder's more 'plausible' films are concerned, his best works are those in which fantasy plays a role which is important and meaningfully related to life.

In *Sunset Boulevard* this is clearly seen. Norma Desmond's madness comes as the logical result of her identification with her star image and is but the ultimate development in a film saturated with reminders of Hollywood's fantastic past,

a past in which she has continued to live. Comparing this with the present-day Hollywood we see in the film, it is not difficult to understand Norma's obsession. Wilder's other outstanding film of this period is *Double Indemnity*, a *film noir* written with Raymond Chandler, the subject of which could be called 'the fantasy of the perfect murder' (the idea was based on an actual case): again the attraction of 'the fantasy' is clearly seen. Also important is *The Lost Weekend* in which a fantasy/reality conflict is found in the way that Don Birnam's alcoholic escapism from life is destroying his hopes of being a writer: ultimately the fantasy of escape becomes the nightmare of delirium tremens. Though perhaps not overall as effective as the other two films, *Lost Weekend* shares with them Wilder's pitiless vision of man's 'lower depths'. Each of these films contains a fully-fledged (fully disillusioned) Wilder hero: Joe Gillis's down and out script-writer who becomes (out of pity) gigolo to an ageing silent movie-queen, Walter Neff's insurance salesman, fast-talking, clever, and utterly ruthless, and Don Birnam's alcoholic 'writer'.

The only other Wilder film which seems to me to be as penetrating as these three is, for all its flaws, *The Apartment*. And although it may seem to be stretching a point to assert that this film too has a fantasy/reality construction in the two alternatives offered to Jack Lemmon – success by pandering to the bosses, otherwise the sack – the basic conflict is there. It is like *The Lost Weekend* in that the hero spends most of the film masochistically suffering the effects of opting for the 'easy' alternative, but is saved ultimately by the girl – the future may be precarious, but at least they have one.

However, the essential point is that here we have an outline of one way of looking at Wilder's films, no doubt just one of a number of ways, and Madsen has not seriously considered any. His summing-up chapter, in which he looks at Wilder's overall achievement, barely runs to three pages. Madsen likes to add little sub-titles, taken from Wilder's films, to his chapter headings – here he quotes the inevitable 'Well, nobody's perfect' from *Some Like it Hot*. Perhaps so, but Wilder does have talent, however much it may go awry at times and he does merit a more serious study than this book offers. The book is informative, has a fairly complete filmography, and is admirably illustrated, but it is not penetrating.

MICHAEL P. WALKER

Information

NEW FILM STUDY MATERIALS AND DOCUMENTS

The following new extract material is available on hire from the Distribution Department of the BFI:

Some Like It Hot: a useful example of Billy Wilder's work with Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe.

The Manchurian Candidate: the last sequence of Frankenheimer's film in which Johnny Eislén assassinates his Mother and Stepfather.

Crossfire: an example of the American social picture, directed by Edward Dmytryk (1947). The extract is made up primarily of the flashback in which George Cooper meets Gloria Grahame.

Babyface Nelson: an interesting example of Don Siegel's style. Babyface Nelson meets John Dillinger whom he joins in a payroll robbery.

What's New Pussycat?: an example of recent British cinema. The scene between Peter O'Toole and Romy Schneider is followed by O'Toole's visit to a strip club where he meets Peter Sellers.

'M': The judgment scene from the early Fritz Lang film.

Accident: recent Losey. Dirk Bogarde returns from London and visits the mansion of his aristocratic student.

Angel Face: one of Otto Preminger's 'women' pictures. Various relationships are caught in the extract which culminates in the murder of the parents.

The Miracle Worker: Ann Sullivan forces Helen to eat from a plate and to fold her napkin.

The following study units have recently become available for hire from the Distribution Department of the BFI:

Study Unit No. 9 – ORSON WELLES

Consists of illustrations from *Citizen Kane*, *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *Macbeth* and the feature *The Lady from Shanghai*. Full notes by Peter Wollen.

Study Unit No. 10 – FRITZ LANG

Extracts from *Siegfried*, *Metropolis*, *'M'* and *The Secret Beyond the Door* together with the feature *The Big Heat*. Full notes by Claire Johnston.

The following compilation material is now available for hire from the Distribution Department of the BFI:

Animation Techniques – Still and Live Action Techniques

Two spools of experimental work carried out in Teacher Training at Hornsey College of Art. The spools are available separately and have notes by Douglas Lowndes and Robert Ferguson on the approaches to film making with children.

The following new and revised documents are available on request from the Education Department of the BFI:

The Use of Extracts in Film Teaching by Daniel Millar

The author describes the use of extracts in relation to 'authorship' and genre.

Film Teaching by John Adams

Account of two ways of using film: as stimulus in thematic studies with fourteen- to fifteen-year-olds of mixed ability and as a study in its own right with fifth and sixth forms.

Film Study: Courses of Training for Teachers

A description of full-time, in service and extra-mural courses in Film Study.

Some Suggested Themes and Materials

This document groups extracts, shorts and features under headings like War, Young People, Religion, etc., and has been revised and brought up to date. New sections have been added and more information provided.

Hollywood

A reading list indicating some of the literature available in English for studying Hollywood.

THE ITA GALLERY

This display gallery provides information about the history of television. The displays include studio set-up, the creation of a television advertisement, the technique of audience research, etc. Guided tours lasting 1½ hours by appointment for groups up to thirty people between 9.30 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday to Friday. Entrance is opposite the Knightsbridge Underground Station. Tel. 01-584 7011. 70, Brompton Road, London, S.W.3

NECCTA

The National Educational Closed Circuit Television Association is to receive a grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation to assist in co-ordinating the educational, financial and technical operations of this new teaching medium. Membership of NECCTA is open to educational institutions and other organizations. Membership fee is £10 per annum. Further information from J. C. Wykes, Esq., Television Centre, Highbury Station Road, London, N.1.

A Checklist of Film Scripts in Print

compiled by Roy Armes

- L'AGE D'OR (Luis Bunuel).
with 'Un Chien Andalou'. *Lorrimer Press*. London. 1969.
- ALPHAVILLE (Jean-Luc Godard).
Lorrimer Press. London. 1966.
- UNE AUSSI LONGUE ABSENCE (Henri Colpi & Marguerite Duras).
with 'Hiroshima Mon Amour'. *Calder & Boyars*. London.
- L'AVVENTURA (Michelangelo Antonioni).
Grove Press. New York.
- THE BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN (Sergei Eisenstein).
Lorrimer Press. London.
- BICYCLE THIEVES (Vittorio De Sica & Cesare Zavattini).
Lorrimer Press. London. 1969.
- THE BLUE ANGEL (Joseph Von Sternberg).
Lorrimer Press. London.
- UN CHIEN ANDALOU (Luis Bunuel).
with 'L'Age d'Or'. *Lorrimer Press*. London. 1969.
- THE COMMUNICANTS (=WINTER LIGHT) (Ingmar Bergman).
in 'A Film Trilogy'. *Calder & Boyars*. London. 1967.
- LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS (Marcel Carne & Jacques Prevert).
Lorrimer Press. London. 1969.
- THE FACE (=THE MAGICIAN) (Ingmar Bergman).
in 'Four Screenplays of Ingmar Bergman'. *Simon & Schuster*. New York. 1960.
- FOUR HUNDRED BLOWS (François Truffaut).
Grove Press. New York.
- LA GRANDE ILLUSION (Jean Renoir).
Lorrimer Press. London.
- LA GUERRE EST FINIE (Alain Resnais & Jorge Semprun).
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Most of the American books in the above list can be obtained from Martin Parnell of Bux, 16 Drury Hill, Nottingham, whose assistance in the compilation of this list has been invaluable.

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